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A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
OF  
BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

by  
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# P R E F A C E

## 1

In this work I have undertaken a comparative study of Buddhism and Christianity because I believe they are the two most sublime religions mankind has ever had. Usually, when two religions are compared, the analysis is biased in favor of the writer's own religion. He starts with preconceived conclusions and his aim really is to defend and uphold his own religion and thus disparage the other. Such a comparison, however minutely it may be treated, can never be called a scholarly work. For example, medieval Christian scholastics, inspite of the subtleties of their arguments, served the Church as only *ancilla ecclesiae* instead of producing truly scholarly writings.

I hope to transcend such limitations and present an unbiased comparison of Buddhism and Christianity. The fact that I am a Buddhist should not make it impossible for me to achieve this aim inasmuch as religious experience is essential for this kind of study. However, one must look at the matter objectively, and not merely from the standpoint of one's own religion, in order to reach unbiased conclusions.

## 2

In such a treatment of the subject several points should be clearly understood. First, we cannot hope to achieve expected results by simply observing and comparing the two religions. The study of Buddhism and Christianity goes beyond mere scholarly interest and concerns the fundamental problems of life. It is for this reason that we should study these two great religions. Our task will be to ascertain as many related aspects of the two religions as possible, consider the degree of their similarities and differences, and evaluate

the position they hold in their own cultural and intellectual environment. Thus, although the immediate objective of our study is Buddhism and Christianity, a comprehensive knowledge of religion and culture in general will be prerequisite. In short, a comparative study of these two religions involves an evaluation of their respective contributions to the whole intellectual heritage of mankind.

Second, I will not try to decide which of the two religions is superior, but will attempt to determine objectively the role each has played in the intellectual development of mankind. This, of course, will require some consideration of their comparative merits and shortcomings. In any final analysis individual subjectivity will give preference to a particular religion, but before this stage is reached a comparative study of this kind should end. Hence the final decision should be left for the reader himself.

Third, in undertaking this comparison, I have purposively excluded considerations of Buddhist doctrine and Christian theology, for these two religions are almost fundamentally different in the character of their thought. It would be meaningless to compare both on the basis of Christian theology with its absolute God and judge Buddhism from this standpoint. It would be equally absurd to make Buddhism, which considers the Buddha as the highest human achievement, the basis of this work. As already mentioned, I hope to present an impartial study in order to determine the respective value and position of these two religions in the intellectual heritage of mankind.

### 3

Accordingly, my comparative study of Buddhism and Christianity will be based upon an investigation of the answers each gives to the following four questions.

The first question "What is the nature of man?" concerns man as he examines himself. In other words, what is our interpretation of man? This question has often been the

starting point of human speculation and is a formative element in Buddhism and Christianity. Since both Buddha and Jesus profoundly reflected on man as he is, I shall first consider the way in which each of them has interpreted man and then review the position these interpretations occupy among the many views of man.

The second question is: "What should I hope to be?" If what we commonly desire and seek after is happiness, then this question concerns the problem of happiness. But each of us may hold different views as to what happiness means. Consequently, the question arises: "What should we hope to become?" or "What idea of happiness should we have and how should we seek it?" Kant says that it is the task of religious philosophy to answer this question, which is probably the major problem of religion. The Buddha answered this query in terms of *nirvana* or "the ultimate peace"; Jesus proffered "the kingdom of heaven" or "the everlasting life." I shall try to examine the position these answers occupy among the many views on happiness which man possesses.

The third question "Upon what should I rely?" concerns the problem of how we should realize the idea of happiness which we have chosen. The answer to this question will be determined by each person's interpretation of man and conditioned by his own view of life, the world, and history. Consequently, we find in Christianity the teaching of "justification by faith," and in Buddhism the "release by wisdom" and furthermore in the Pure Land Sect the "way to be born in the Pure Land by the adoration of Amida Buddha." The view of original Buddhism which advocates "release by wisdom" perhaps goes beyond the general idea of faith, but here also "dependence on *dharma*" plays an important part. Therefore we can say that the major subject of this problem is faith. On the other hand, there is a surprising similarity between the fundamental structure of Christian faith and the faith which the different teachers of the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism advocate. I intend to examine this point as intensively as I can.

The fourth and last question "What should I do?" is primari-

ly a problem of religious practice. Kant said that it is the task of ethics to answer this question; but religion also must answer the same question although from a different basis. Therefore, on the one hand, we must consider the difference between religious practice and worldly morality, and on the other hand, we must examine what position Buddhist practice and Christian practice occupy among various religions.

If we can determine how these four questions have been answered by Buddhism and Christianity and also what place their answers occupy in the intellectual heritage of mankind, I think we have fulfilled the general requirements of our comparative study.

## 4

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Fumio Masutani

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# PART I

## ON HUMAN BEINGS

—"What is the Nature of Man?"—

### Chapter I. Self-Examination of Man

#### 1

A Buddhist scripture called the *Serpent Sutra* says:

He who has not found any essence in the existences, like one that looks for flowers on fig-trees, that *bhikkhu* (wanderer) leaves this and the further shore, as a snake (quits its) old worn out skin.<sup>(1)</sup>

The sutra has sixteen stanzas besides this, but they are all concluded with the same refrain: "The *bhikkhu* leaves this and the further shore, as a snake quits its old worn out skin."

What is stressed in this comparison of a snake's ecdysis is the deliverance from attachments. In philosophical terms this can be expressed as the detachment from *Täglichkeit* (daily life). One who is steeped in daily life, characterized by idle talk, curiosity, and obscurity, is called *das Man* (the average man) by Heidegger.<sup>(2)</sup> In him there is almost nothing which can be called self-examination, and he is only living, a slave to his environment. Such a way of life was called *prthagjana* (foolish mediocrity) by Buddha. It means those who are foolish, ignorant of the teachings, unable to awaken themselves, and are only repeating a cycle of many births and deaths.

Turning to religious people, however, we find that their way of life is quite different from the way of life of these average people. Though we cannot make a sweeping statement as to their differences, at least here their daily secular life is reflected on,

(1) *Sutta-nipata*, tr. by V. Fausböll, (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. X.) p. 1

(2) cf. M. Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*. 1927.



and is denied to a certain extent, and a new principle of human life has been received from some lofty agency, or has been chosen by themselves. This is the religious experience called "conversion" or "rebirth." One can become religious only through this experience. In order to extricate oneself from the daily life, one must necessarily reflect upon oneself and one's surroundings beforehand.

Thus arises, first of all, the question, "What manner of man am I?" It is an introspection of oneself as an autonomous personality. The primitive society is said to be homogeneous because its members all think alike and live alike. This means that individual ego has not yet been established as autonomous personality. Accordingly, during the stage of primitive and tribal religions, it is impossible for one to ask himself this question. On the other hand, the starting point in established religions is marked with the self-examination engendered by such a question. This can be seen clearly especially in Buddhism and Christianity.

## 2

All the biographers of Buddha say unanimously that he was born of a well-to-do family and was living a happy life before he renounced the world. Then why did he have to renounce the happy life, leave his family, and choose the "homeless life"? The most credible information on this matter is found in the following words of a sutra believed to be his own reminiscences:

*Bhikkhus*, I was happy, I was too happy to know any suffering. *Bhikkhus*, in my father's mansion there was a pond with red and white lotus flowers. My room was always perfumed with the best incense produced in Kasi. My clothes were all made of cloth produced in Kasi. Whenever I went out, I was sheltered with a white umbrella. I had a winter house in winter, a summer house in summer, and a spring house in spring. During the four months of rainy season in summer, women played music for me. *Bhikkhus*, though in others' houses the servants were

provided with only rice-bran and porridge, in my father's house even they were fed with rice and meat.

*Bhikkhus*, though I was thus happy and wealthy, I happened to think:

A foolish mediocrity grows old, and he cannot escape growing old. And yet he loathes to see old people, forgetting about himself. I am also destined to grow old, and I do not know how to escape it. Then, should I loathe to look at old people? It is not proper for me to do so. *Bhikkhus*, when I observed thus, all the pride I took in my youth left me.

A foolish mediocrity becomes sick, and he cannot escape becoming sick. And yet he loathes the sick, forgetting about himself. I am also destined to become ill, and I do not know how to escape becoming ill. So it is not proper for me to loathe the sick people. *Bhikkhus*, when I observed thus, all the pride I took in my health left me.

A foolish mediocrity dies, and he cannot escape death. And yet he loathes the dead. I am also destined to die, and I do not know how to escape death. It is not proper for me to loathe to see others die while I am also to die some day. *Bhikkhus*, when I observed thus, all the pride I took in my life left me.<sup>(1)</sup>

As the above reminiscences are spoken most naively in Buddha's own words in contrast to the later biographies of Buddha, I think they disclose the actual fact of the motive of his renunciation more accurately than anything else. Moreover, in regard to the question we face now, it can be said that they form a very valuable record in that they quite eloquently depict the daily life of man and the way man's self-examination should be.

Buddha said his was quite a happy life without any suffering when he saw it from the viewpoint of "a foolish average man" with no reflection. It was indeed the so-called happy

(1) *Anguttara-nikaya*, 3, 38. cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* (The Medium-length Agama in Chinese) 29. (The Taisho Edition of the Tripitaka in Chinese, Vol. 1, pp.607-8).

life. On introspection, however, he suddenly found that it was far from real happiness. "I was destined to grow old, to get sick, and to die. For all that, I had been loathing to see others grow old, fall ill, and die, forgetting about myself. How foolish I was!" he said. It was as if one suddenly awoke to find that he had been indulging in sleep in the midst of the impending horror of death. "All the pride I took in my youth, in my health, and in my life was gone at once," recollected Buddha. It was this reflection that made him carry out the Great Renunciation.

## 3

Such introspection of Buddha naturally has exerted great influence upon his followers, and has produced a pattern in Buddhism. The pattern is, in short, that of reflecting, not on one's deeds but on one's existence as a whole. However happy and carefree a man's life may seem to be, on reflecting upon himself, he will surely find his existence to be an uneasy one. The followers of Buddha found their starting point when they acknowledged the suffering of the uneasy human existence and began to ponder over its solution.

Among the followers converted by Buddha soon after he had attained enlightenment was a young man named Yasa. It was a self-examination of the same type which motivated his conversion. A son of a millionaire in Baranasi, he was a tender-hearted man. As is narrated in a sutra, he, like Buddha in his youth, had a winter house in cold winter, a summer house in hot summer, and a special house in the rainy season. Once, during the four-month rainy season, he stayed in his rain-house without going out, attended on by waiting-maids. One night, tired of entertainment, he fell asleep. He awoke after a while and found the maids slumbering in most disgusting postures under the dim light of a lantern. Seeing this, he realized that such life was devoid of real happiness. "Alas! Woe is me!" he lamented, and stole out of the house and wandered until he came to the Deer Park. There, quite

unexpectedly, he met Buddha in his morning walk, and listening to his sermon, became a wandering *bhikkhu*.

In the case of the young man Yasa, his self-examination was not so well organized as Buddha's. He only felt that the so-called happy life was not always really happy. He keenly felt the futility and sorrow which Kierkegaard says will always accompany pleasure. And when he listened to Buddha, he perceived for the first time what it was that he had felt. "He obtained, then and there, the pure eye for the truth," says the sutra. The life of man as it is, which he had never been able to see because of the veil of worldly dust over it, began to appear on his mental horizon. His eyes were opened, and the light began to shine. Thus he started his religious life.<sup>(1)</sup>

Buddha sometimes converted young people more directly, saying to them: "Reflect upon yourselves!" We can say that this is an example of his conversion of people by directly calling upon them to do self-examination. Once not long after his enlightenment, when Buddha was taking a rest under a tree in the woods, there came a number of young men chasing after a woman who had stolen their possessions. One of them asked, "Didn't you see a woman here?" Buddha asked in return, "Young men, which do you think is more important, to look for the woman or to look for yourselves?" They were directly required to reflect on themselves. "It is far better for us to look for ourselves," they said, and Buddha taught his teachings systematically, in his usual way, to the young people sitting there. The sutra says that they, who had minds as pure as snow, on hearing the *dharma*, were able to open their spiritual eyes then and there.<sup>(2)</sup> What was attained by this first of all was: "All phenomena have their beginnings and their endings."<sup>(3)</sup> Needless to say, it was nothing but the perception of human existence controlled by the law of causality.

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*. I, 7, 1-6.

(2) *ibid.* I, 14, 1-4.

(3) *ibid.* I, 14, 4.

## 4

How was this point with Jesus Christ?

We do not know clearly how he had entered his religious life. The Gospel covers his life quite minutely after he was baptized by John in the river of Jordan. By then he had already reached a certain stage in his religious life. "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"<sup>(1)</sup> said John to Jesus. Jesus had had some followers already. What was the course of his mental life before he reached this stage? What reflections was it that made him enter the life of a prophet? The answers to these questions are hidden in the obscure years of his life.

This applies also to many of his followers. There are hardly any of them whose course of conversion can be traced to introspection. The Gospel records some cases of their conversion, but the description of them is strangely simple. For example, the case of Peter is as follows:

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Immediately they left their nets and followed him.<sup>(2)</sup>

James and his brother John were helping their father mend nets in a boat. When Jesus called them, they immediately followed him, leaving behind their boat and father.<sup>(3)</sup> And when Matthew, the tax-collector, was sitting in his tax office, Jesus said to him, "Follow me," and he rose and followed him.<sup>(4)</sup> Whether it was an unparalleled spiritual power of Jesus, or something which had already existed within these followers, that lay at the back of these strangely simple des-

(1) Matthew 3, 14.

(2) *ibid* 4, 17-20.

(3) *ibid* 4, 21-22.

(4) *ibid* 9, 9.

criptions, it is impossible to say. In any case there is nothing that would clearly indicate the role of any introspection in the matter.

However, in the sermons Jesus preached to his disciples and the multitudes, there are not a few words that urge us to look into the depth of ourselves by breaking through the wall of daily life:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.<sup>(1)</sup>

This is not a teaching that can be found in the ordinary morality of daily life, and the words may not be fully understood by those who cannot look into the depth of their minds. Jesus often used the expression, "Who has ears to hear,"<sup>(2)</sup> but what manner of man was it who was really able to understand Jesus' words?

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.<sup>(3)</sup> How could this be understood by those who are daily steeped in selfish love? On another occasion he said:

Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.<sup>(4)</sup>

And once he said:

Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne

(1) Matthew 5, 27-28.

(2) *ibid.* 11, 15. 13, 9. etc.

(3) *ibid.* 5, 43-45.

(4) *ibid.* 6, 2-3.

of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.<sup>(1)</sup>

Who really had the "ears to hear" these words? It could not have been the common man who "sat down to eat and drink and rose up to dance."<sup>(2)</sup>

Not before Paul was it clearly recognized that introspection, as in Buddhism, was the starting point of those who followed Jesus' way. Since he himself was also a Jew, and since he had once been registered among the Pharisees, who were so famous for their strict observance of the commandments, the subject of Paul's introspection was naturally the commandments. "But that Israel who pursued the righteousness which is based on law did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why?"<sup>(3)</sup> Moses taught that those who did righteousness according to the law would be blessed by God. Nevertheless, though Israel followed after the law of righteousness, she could not fulfill it, and therefore, she was never blessed by God. But why? The reflection on this matter was, in Paul, immediately connected with a touching introspection. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin."<sup>(4)</sup> It was not the law that was to blame. It was he himself that deserved to be blamed. On reflection he found out that he was a being who, though anxious to do good, did evil before he became aware of it.<sup>(5)</sup> It was impossible for such a wretched man to fulfill the law, however hard he might try. The "stumbling-stone" was within himself.

Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.<sup>(6)</sup>

Thus appeared before him a way of "justification by faith" after going through a self-examination.

Then, when, breaking through the wall of daily life, and

(1) Matthew 5, 33-36. (2) 1 Corinthians 10, 7. cf. Exodus 32, 6.

(3) Romans 9, 31. (4) *ibid.* 7, 14. (5) *ibid.* 7, 19.

(6) *ibid.* 3, 23-24.



awaking from the idle sleep of a common man, they scrutinized the actual state of things about themselves, what manner of people did Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Honen, and Shinran find themselves to be?



## Chapter II. Two Interpretations of Man

## 1

It was the bitterness of life represented by the fourfold suffering of birth, old age, sickness, and death that drove Buddha into the wanderer's life "under a tree, on a rock." Even his apparently happy youthful life without any want was in reality a miserable existence inevitably burdened with human sufferings. He resolved to renounce the world when he shuddered in despair at this inherent weakness of mankind. At that moment he was probably the most serious pessimist we can think of. What he attained while meditating under the Bodhi-tree, however, was undoubtedly a way of wisdom. "This opens the inner eye, reveals wisdom, and brings the ultimate peace,"<sup>(1)</sup> said he at the beginning of his first sermon, "The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness," describing the way. What is meant by the "inner eye"? Sutras often speak of it as a "pure eye for truth," an unclouded eye that perceives truth without any illusion. It was with such an eye that Buddha had penetrated into the structure of all existence, and found that all things come into existence according to the law of interdependent causality. Seeking after the root of the elements of mortality (birth, old age, sickness, and death) by applying this law of interdependent causality, he grasped "craving" (*tanha*) as the all-important motive factor. He found out further that the bitterness of life was only a chimerical phenomenon projected in this world by man's ignorance of this interdependent structure of existence based on craving. By perceiving thus, he was able to release himself from mortality, overcome the bitterness of life, and attain "deathlessness" and "fearlessness," and declared, "I am omniscient, I am omnipotent."<sup>(2)</sup> In short, Buddha started on his

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*, I, 6, 17. cf. *Shi-bun-ritsu*, (The Four Parts of Vinaya in Chinese) 32 (The Taisho Edition, Vol. 22, p. 787).

(2) *ibid.* I, 6, 8.

way by perceiving the transiency of all phenomena. He did not merely grieve over this transiency. Instead, he accomplished the way by depending upon the thinking faculty of man. This has to be understood and remembered clearly whenever we speak of Buddha's interpretation of man.

In connection with this, the words which he casually spoke while he was sitting under the Bodhi-tree immediately after attaining enlightenment are very interesting. An old sutra records it as follows: "It is painful to live a life with nothing to respect or revere. What kind of priests and Brahmins should I respect and depend on?"<sup>(1)</sup> Doesn't this passage show that even Buddha faced the parting of two ways, self-confidence and anxiety of the thinking man? It shows that an anxiety, which everyone will experience sooner or later—the anxiety that we cannot bear unless we have something to depend on—came across his mind at that moment. However, according to the sutra, Buddha found out after a quiet meditation that there was nothing in the world which he could respect and depend on. He reached the conclusion that the only thing he could depend on was the *dharma* he had obtained.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus Buddha had definitely chosen the positive way of confidence in the thinking man. In the words of Pascal, man is as weak as a reed, but he is a reed that thinks. And Buddha, taking this fact of man being a thinking reed as the last resort, has firmly established a positive way of self-confidence amid this transitory and disagreeable world.

I cannot help recollecting here the lesson Buddha gave on this matter before his great death to his disciple, Ananda.

Therefore, O Ananda, be ye islands unto yourselves. Take the self as refuge. Take yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the *dhamma* as an island. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 6, 2. *Garava* 2. cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 4, 1188 (The Taisho Edition, Vol. 2, p. 321).

(2) *ibid.* 4-7.

(3) *Digha-nikaya* 16 *Mahaparinibbanasuttanta* 2, 26.

I believe there is nothing that describes the character of Buddha's way better than this well-known lesson. In short, it is a way of man's self-confidence. It is oneself alone that one can depend on and look up to as one's lamp. This is the essence of the way Buddha has chosen. It is important for us to understand clearly what a great confidence Buddha has placed in the faculty of the reasoning power of man.

## 2

What is man? It is very ironical that man has to ask himself this question of man for ever. The spiritual history of mankind shows that man has been asking this question throughout the ages. The mystery of man's existence is, instead of being cleared up, deepened more and more by the repetition of the question. Nevertheless, philosophers, moralists, and men of letters, trying desperately to solve this mystery, have piled up a number of important patterns of interpretation of man in the long course of history.

One of them is the so-called *homo sapiens* pattern, a Greek rationalistic interpretation. It tries to grasp the essence of man in the fact that man reasons. It makes this the distinguishing characteristic between man and other animals, and attributes nobility to man because of this fact. Man is inferior to horses in running; he is inferior to oxen in pulling; he can only envy birds their ability to fly about freely in the sky. But depending upon his own reason, man has established his unique position in nature and in the universe. Reasoning is the most sublime prerogative of man. Such is the *homo sapiens* way of thinking. Diogenes of Sinope, a Greek humourist-philosopher, once said: "Man must have reason, otherwise, he must have a cord to hang himself with." The Greek rationalistic interpretation of man is expounded clearly even in this joke.

Those who hold this view naturally put trust in reason, and are prepared to do anything according to the dictates of reason.

"Let us follow the argument (*logos*) whithersoever it leads."<sup>(1)</sup> This was not only the motto of Plato, but also the fundamental characteristic common to all the Greek geniuses. Ancient history tells us that the Greeks loved wisdom (*philosophia*) for its own sake far more strongly than any other people. To see things as they are, to differentiate their meanings, and to establish their mutual relations—this was their instinct and passion. "Where reasoning, like wind, takes us, thither we must go."<sup>(2)</sup> When they were overwhelmed by a passion for truth, they were bold enough to put complete trust in reason, and follow its direction, regardless of the consequences. A critic called it "the fearlessness of intellect."<sup>(3)</sup> It may also be called "the fortitude of reason." Ruskin touches on this point in his *Modern Painters*. "Now observe," says Ruskin—his primary reference being to Homer—"that in their dealings with all these subjects the Greeks never shrink from horror; down to its uttermost depths, to its most appalling physical detail, they strive to sound the secrets of sorrow. For them there is no passing by on the other side, no turning away the eyes to vanity from pain.... Whether there be consolation for them or not, neither apathy nor blindness shall be their saviour: if for them, thus knowing the facts of the grief of earth, any hope, relief, or triumph may hereafter seem possible,—well; be if not, still hopeless, reliefless, eternal, the sorrow shall be met face to face."<sup>(4)</sup>

## 3

When we reflect thoroughly on the way taught by Buddha, we will soon find clearly that it is also based on a *homo sapiens* pattern.

As has been said already, Buddha started on his way since

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(1) Platon: *Nomos*. II, 667, A.

(2) Platon: *Politica*. 111, 394, D.

(3) cf. S. H. Butcher: *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius*, 3rd Ed. p. 6.

(4) J. Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, V, 215.

he observed human suffering. On recalling his miserable existence burdened with the fourfold bitterness of birth, old age, sickness, and death, he remarked that the pride of his youth instantly vanished and the pleasure of his life totally collapsed.<sup>(1)</sup> However, Buddha was not a weakling such as succumbs to grief. He could not think of turning his eyes from the bitterness of life to the ephemeral sweetness of futility. He never thought of seeking salvation in a "blind state of self-complacency in ignorance." He faced human sorrow with unflinching eyes, and endeavored to unravel its mystery with the fortitude of his reasoning power. The conclusion he subsequently reached was very pessimistic: "All is suffering."

Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are suffering. Contact with unpleasant things is suffering, separation from the pleasing is suffering, not getting what one wishes is suffering. In short the five groups of grasping (five *skandhas*) are suffering.<sup>(2)</sup>

Nevertheless, he, instead of escaping from the sorrowful life with eyes shut, tried to pry out the secret of such sorrow with eyes wide open. A way opened itself thereupon. This was the fourfold truth of suffering, its cause, its cessation and practice. This constituted the core of Buddha's first sermon delivered to the five *bhikkhus* at the Deer-Park in Benares.<sup>(3)</sup> Reasoning formed its backbone to the last. Now, what is the cause of human existence which is suffering? The answer constitutes the second truth.

Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the cause of suffering: the craving thirst, which tends to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and

(1) *Anguttara-nikaya* 3, 38. cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* 29 (The Taisho Edition, Vol. I, pp. 607-8)

(2) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*. 1, 2, 19.

(3) cf. *Majjhima-nikaya* 28 *Mahahattipadopama-sutta*.

there; namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for vanity.<sup>(1)</sup>

The cause of existence, in the last analysis, is craving. More properly it is the impulse of life generating desire. It makes its manifestation in many ways, which are divisible into the craving for sensual satisfaction, the craving for enduring life, and the craving for superiority and honor. These lead into greed and become the cause of illusions. Man is ignorant of the truth of these desires and so he becomes attached to them. This, Buddha concludes, is the cause of all human suffering.

Then Buddha turns to the next question, "What should man do?" The answer reveals the third truth. It is the cessation of suffering.

Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, the cessation without a remainder of craving, the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment.<sup>(2)</sup>

Suffering originates in attachment, attachment originates in craving, and craving originates in ignorance. Therefore, in order to wipe out suffering we have to wipe out attachment; in order to wipe out attachment we have to wipe out craving, and in order to wipe out craving we have to wipe out ignorance.

This is the prescription for Buddha's way of life. In other words, one can be released from suffering by opening his inner eyes, developing wisdom, wiping out craving, and giving up attachment.

How can this principle be put into practice? The fourth truth answers this question.

Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the way that leads to the cessation of suffering: this is the Noble Eight-fold Path: namely, right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.<sup>(3)</sup>

These truths are usually spoken of as "The Four Noble

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*, 1, 6, 20.

(2) *ibid.* 1, 6, 21.

(3) *ibid.* 1, 6, 22.

Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path." They constitute the fundamentals of Buddha's teachings. An old sutra says:

As the foot-prints of all animals can be comprehended in those of the elephant that is the greatest of them all, so are all the good teachings comprehended in the Four Noble Truths.<sup>(1)</sup>

This teaching is clearly based on "confidence in reason." Buddha sought the way persistently along the lines of reason and wisdom. It was a function of reason that made him observe life as it was and conclude that it was full of suffering. It was also reason that made him declare that suffering could be wiped out as soon as craving was wiped out. The practice of the Noble Eightfold Path was to be accomplished also under the guidance of wisdom. To sum up, we can say without the least hesitation that the confidence in reason was the fundamental attitude of Buddha. A passage from his first sermon says: "It opens inner eyes, develops wisdom, and leads to the ultimate peace."<sup>(2)</sup> A sutra says more concretely:

Knowing that this body is (fragile) like a jar, and making his thought firm like a fortress, one should attack Mara (the tempter) with the weapon of knowledge.<sup>(3)</sup>

Reason is the most supreme asset man is endowed with, and his last foothold; with it, man can get over to the other side from this side, can enter the life of righteousness out of that of illusion, can elevate himself to a noble human existence from a mean animal life. A later sutra aptly says: "In the sea of Buddhism, we cross over by wisdom."<sup>(4)</sup>

#### 4

The religion of Buddha is based on the confidence in the reasoning man (*homo sapiens*) while that of Jesus is definitely

(1) *Majjhima-nikaya* 28 *Mahahatthipadapama-sutta*.

(2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 56, 11. *Tathagatena-vutta* 3.

(3) *Dhammapada*, (tr. by Max Müller) 40. (S. B. E. Vol. X, p. 14).

(4) *Dai-chido-ron* (The Chinese translation of Mahaprajnaparamitasastra) Vol. I.



antipodal to the former.

In the philosophical study of man, man is often defined as an intermediate being. Indeed, we have a tendency for good, but at the same time we have a tendency for evil. This fact cannot be denied. Speaking in Christian terms, we live "twixt heaven and earth." We are intermediate beings, also as to reason. We have a desire to go our way following the guidance of reason. But at the same time we have an inclination to live an irregular and degenerate life against reason. Who can deny this? Thus, we are intermediate beings to the last, wanderers between good and evil, fighters against both lust and reason. Pascal said in his *Pensées*:

If he had only reason without passion. . . . If he had only passion without reason. . . . But having both, he cannot be without strife, being unable to be at peace with the one without being at war with the other.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus man is always divided against himself. As long as introspection goes on in our minds, we have to admit that this is our true state. As a result of such introspection, people are presently divided into two camps.

The so-called theories of man's "inherent good" and "inherent evil," which have been pitted against each other in the history of Oriental thought, can be found also in the history of Occidental thought. There the antagonism of these two most fundamental ideas has presented itself in the form of strife or interchange between Hellenism and Hebraism. Hellenism, the trend of rationalism originating in Greece, takes the stand on the "inherent good" theory and, convinced of the superiority of human reason, strides proudly heavenward; while Hebraism, originating among the Semites, takes the stand on the theory of "inherent evil," and leads a life of the "vale of tears," lamenting his sin. Jesus' religion was the largest and the most beautiful flower that bloomed in the field of Hebraism. Here we will discover that reason, which is supposed to be some-

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(1) Pascal: *Pensées*, 412. (Libraire Hachette p. 457)



thing man should be proud of, is utterly given up. However proud we may be of our reason and wisdom, they are after all limited. What is unlimited and absolute is beyond the reach of our human reason. If so, what could we be really proud of? What is it that we could really be praised for? Reason has thus become a thing we cannot be proud of any more. Humility in respect of one's own reason and wisdom becomes a virtue to be praised, instead. And man, who has abandoned the idea of superiority of reason, realizes in essence his limitation before the Absolute. The limitation is to be grasped through man's recognition of himself as a mortal being, burdened with sin. Of these two, death and sin, sin is emphasized more than death. To make sin the basic cause of death is a remarkable characteristic of this interpretation of man.<sup>(1)</sup>

The ground on which the religion of Jesus Christ stood was clearly the one that upheld this interpretation. It stood on the conviction of man's frailty and transiency, especially on the conviction of man's sinfulness.

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. . . . For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners,"<sup>(2)</sup> said Jesus. Riveting his eyes only upon the least, the foolish, the weak, and the sinful, he came to them for help, became their friend, and preached them God's love and His reign.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.<sup>(3)</sup>

This plainly expresses the fundamental character of Jesus' religion.

## 5

Paul, who had developed world evangelism for Christian church after the death of Jesus, contributed many well-

(1) cf. Romans 6, 23, 'For the wages of sin is death.'

(2) Matthew 9, 12-13.

(3) *ibid.* 11, 28.

defined interpretations to Christianity. In interpreting Jesus' life and his death on the cross, he explained that Jesus' whole life was a revelation of God's desire for man's salvation, and that his innocent blood on the cross was shed to atone for man's sin. The creation, Adam's degeneration, and the birth of sin mythically narrated in the Old Testament had prepared such an interpretation for Paul. Paul started from here. He said, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned."<sup>(1)</sup> He also said, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come."<sup>(2)</sup> Every one of us is also burdened with sin....the sin originating in Adam's disobedience to God's commandments. It follows that, because of this, man, although he is eager to do good, cannot do good, while he is apt to do evil which he is not desirous of doing.

Augustine said: "It was possible for man not to sin (*posse non peccare*), but after Adam, it is impossible for man not to sin (*non posse non peccare*)."<sup>(1)</sup> If this is so, it is hardly possible for such a miserable man to think that he can save himself by his own merits. There is only one way left. It is to receive God's grace through Jesus' redemption, believing in him. There is no alternative. It was such consciousness of original sin and the grace of God that constituted the framework of Jesus' religion.

This is quite a contrast to Buddha's teaching characterized by reason. It is no longer the self that one can depend on. It is not reason but the consciousness of man's powerlessness and sinfulness that leads man to God's love. Accordingly, this way is tightly closed to those who boast of their own reason, and only opened to those who believe in Jesus. This is not a belief to be had after understanding and being convinced of what is preached. The desire for reasoning is rejected here

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(1) Romans 5, 12.

(2) *ibid.* 5, 14.

completely: "The son of God was crucified. Because this is a shameful thing, I am not ashamed of it. The son of God died. Because this is a ridiculous thing, I should believe it to the utmost. He was buried and was resurrected. Because this is impossible, it is very certain."<sup>(1)</sup>

Insufficiency of rational understanding does not mean insufficiency of belief. On the contrary, the believers thought that the less they were concerned over reason the firmer their belief became. Father Tertullianus said, "I believe it because it is absurd (*Credo quia absurdum est*)."<sup>(2)</sup>

This way is entirely different from the way of Buddha. Buddha taught that we should depend on ourselves and the *dharma* as refuge, and on nothing else. In Christianity, the spirit of self-reliance and the desire for reasoning are to be abandoned; the flower of faith is to bloom only through belief in Jesus. The two ways are quite separate ones. Consequently, their interpretations of man are also diametrically opposed to each other. One upholds reason and urges us to develop it, the other denounces human reasoning and exhorts us to be saved by God in humble consciousness of our sin. They both start as wanderers between darkness and light, and resolutely reject darkness with the hope of becoming the child of light, and yet they march along two paths which are entirely different from each other.

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(1) The Saying of Tertullianus (about 160-222).

(2) *ibid.*

## Chapter III. Two Interpretations of Man (contd.)

## 1

We can see the difference in the interpretation of man between Buddha and Jesus more concretely in their respective attitude toward missionary work.

The passage on Greek oratory in Butcher's *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius* was of great interest to me in this connection. We know that the Greeks liked debate and loved oratory as much as shows. It is also a well-known fact that their oratory was the outcome of their rational and aesthetic spirit. Butcher describes the audience and the orator as follows:

They were aware of their own susceptibilities, and resolved beforehand to be proof against the enchantment. In the presence of a trained speaker their attitude was one of vigilant incredulity. To guard against surprises, to detect sophistries, became an intellectual luxury; and the unimpassioned calm of the normal Attic peroration—the coldness, as moderns might say, the apparent anticlimax—is in some sort of homage that the orator pays to reason: to reason, not to emotion, he addresses the final appeal.<sup>(1)</sup>

This was indeed a form of oratory worthy of the Greeks who upheld the standpoint of *homo sapiens*.

Buddha's way of preaching was also worthy of one who upheld the stand of *homo sapiens*. Sutras record that his way of preaching was always exhaustive and logical. It neither commanded authoritatively nor appealed to emotion. It spoke to the reason of its audience with rational words. Accordingly, those who had been enlightened by Buddha always recollected as follows: "He brought forth light in the darkness, so that those who had eyes to see might see."<sup>(2)</sup> Another sutra records the lesson Buddha gave his disciples

(1) S.H. Butcher: *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius*, p. 15.

(2) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga I*, 7, 10.

on how to preach the *dharma*, when he sent them off for missionary work:

O, *bhikkhus*! Preach the *dharma* which is good at the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end, in the logic as well as in the expression. Explain the life of holiness perfect and pure in every phrase. There are those who are scarcely stained, but if the *dharma* is not preached to them, they will be degraded. Proclaim to them the *dharma*, and they will understand and accept it.<sup>(1)</sup>

It was the *dharma* taught to them by Buddha that the disciples had to preach to people. Their sermons had to possess adequate logic and lucidity. This is parallel to the Greek oratory which was capable of fulfilling the requirement of being both rational and aesthetic. This way of preaching differs of course vastly from that in which the conclusion is flung out at the very beginning. It is also different from the one in which passionate words are flung at the end to move the hearts of its audience. With logic and lucidity at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, reason speaks to another reason quietly. Such was the ideal of the sermon which Buddha preached himself and which he taught his disciples to deliver. Here we see vividly the striking feature of Buddha and his followers behaving themselves as *homo sapiens*.

Once sons of good families in Magadha followed Buddha one after another, which brought a great terror among people. When the *bhikkhus* visited the city of Rajagaha begging, some citizens angrily cried:

There has appeared a great wanderer in the city called Rajagaha of Magadha. Whom does he try to invite now that he has subdued the young men of Sanjaya?

The *bhikkhus* informed Buddha on their return of the reproach they had heard. Buddha replied:

It won't last long. It will last only several days. If you are reviled, answer them with this verse: Buddha

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(1) *ibid.* 1, 11, 1.

invites people with truth. Who would be jealous of their coming to it?

And the commotion soon died out as Buddha had predicted. A sutra explains that people had come to understand that "Buddha was inviting lawfully, not unlawfully."<sup>(1)</sup> Here again we are struck by the fact that Buddha's way was to the last a way of the "man of reason."

## 2

It is the very content of his first sermon called "The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness" that proves more clearly than anything else the rationality of Buddha's teaching.

According to an old sutra, Buddha, having arrived at last at the great solution under the Bodhi-tree, could not easily decide to preach to others what he had attained himself. He thought to himself—the *dharma* I have just attained is so deep to be comprehended, and so subtle that only the very wise can understand. On the other hand, the world is so used to lust, in which people indulge themselves with great joy. It will be difficult for them to understand the truth of causality and to see the way to ultimate tranquility. Even if I try to preach the *dharma* now, they will not grasp it, and will leave me exhausted in vain.<sup>(2)</sup> The following verse is said to have flashed across his mind then:

What I have attained through hard labor  
Is not to be preached now.  
For them indulged in greed and lust,  
The *dharma* is far from easy to understand,  
Which is irreconcilable with the world,  
Too subtle and too deep to see,  
Too minute and delicate to comprehend.  
They cannot understand the *dharma*,  
Who cling to lust, wrapped in a veil of ignorance.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*. I, 24, 5-7.

(2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 6, 1, *Brahma-ayacana* 3.

(3) *ibid.* 4.

The old sutra says that Buddha, thinking thus, was inclined to keep silence and refrain from preaching.

In due course of time, however, Buddha changed his mind and decided to preach. The circumstances leading to this decision are told with a mythical touch in a sutra called *Recommendation of Brahma-deva*.<sup>(1)</sup> Buddha is described therein to have come to the conviction after observation that there were some people capable of understanding his *dharma*. Then he thought, "To whom should I preach the *dharma* first? Who will understand this truth promptly?" And he chose at last those seekers who were called "the five *bhikkhus*" in old sutras. They were Kondanna and four other ascetics who were in company with Buddha when he was practising austerities for six years. When he gave up his austere life on purpose, they condemned him as "one fallen to luxury." He regarded them as seekers who had already reached some height, and chose them as the audience of his first sermon for they were easy to instruct, being unspoiled and clever. Hence the content of his sermon unfolded before them turned out to be a wonderfully systematic teaching of wisdom and practice.

It begins with the declaration of his fundamental standpoint called the "Middle Path" as all of us know:

These two extremes, *bhikkhus*, are not to be practised by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That conjoined with the passions and luxury, low, vulgar, common, ignoble, and useless; and that conjoined with self-torture, painful, ignoble, and useless. Avoiding these two extremes the *Tathagata* (Buddha) has gained the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, *nirvana*.<sup>(2)</sup>

He condemned the two extremes, Epicureanism and asceticism, as irrational. He declared that the really rational way to wisdom and sacredness should be the middle way. And from

(1) *Brahma-ayacana*.

(2) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga* 1, 6, 18.



this point of view he preaches the system of observation of life and the system of practice, namely the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Here one must first recognize frankly the fact of the mutable and impermanent life. When people become aware of the fact of the suffering-ridden life, Buddha goes on to preach the truth of the cause of human suffering, tells them the principle for its extinction, and reveals to them the eight right paths as a system for its realization. Then he concludes: "O, *bhikkhus*! Well has been taught the *dharma*! Come and free yourself from suffering through pure practice."<sup>(1)</sup> It was indeed a splendid system of well-organized reasoning.

Consequently, the *bhikkhus*, enlightened by his teaching, "as having *dharma* of the seen, *dharma* of the won, *dharma* of the understood, *dharma* of the wholly penetrated-into, as having lost perplexity and doubt, as having won confidence, and as not being in dependence on others with respect to the teaching of the teacher,"<sup>(2)</sup> said to Buddha, "We wish to renounce the world to get ordination under your guidance."

So records a sutra concerning their renunciation, the circumstances of which are helpful in understanding the character of his teaching. The *bhikkhus* had neither been blindly convinced by the simple, authoritative words, nor been made to perceive impulsively under the influence of simple parables. If their attitude in conversion is to be described in the term "belief," that belief was one based on understanding and conviction. They could not help believing in and following the teachings, now that they had completely understood them. So we see that both the speaker and the hearers sitting there were all men of reason.

### 3

In contrast to Buddhism, we can find nothing theoretical in what Jesus preached. He made his appearance in public

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga* I, 6, 32 and 34.

(2) *ibid.* I. 6, 37.



all of a sudden around the age of thirty, and made his exit in like manner. During the time he only preached the glad tidings of the Lord. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was what John the Baptist had once cried by the Jordan.<sup>(1)</sup> Jesus tried to spread this very saying among people and convince them of it through parables and miracles.

The kingdom of God will come—this idea was not original either. It was a belief which had been cherished of old among his fellow men, and which he had also entertained, being born and brought up in this tradition. We can say the same thing in respect of other traditions such as the Lord's Day, the Last Judgement and the End of the World. He as well as John the Baptist felt that the Last Judgement, the End of the World, and the arrival of the kingdom of God were all near at hand. He believed that "the ax is laid to the root of the trees."<sup>(2)</sup> And like John he cried that the kingdom of God was near at hand, and urged the people to repent without delay in order to prepare for the day. Such a teaching as this must be said to be far from being theoretical.

As is well known, the writers of the Gospel, describing Jesus' manner of preaching, said, "For he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes."<sup>(3)</sup> The Gospel, according to one of the writers, states that people were amazed at his teaching, saying to one another, "What is this?" or "A new teaching!"<sup>(4)</sup> These passages enable us to see the character of his sermons.

It was not because Jesus preached what was entirely new, or what had never been known to them at all that made people listen to his sermons and open their eyes in wonder. Their amazement was due to the way he preached. They were amazed at and attracted by his fresh and unique manner of expression totally different from what they had been used to. The writers of the Gospel were right in saying, "not as their scribes." Here the word "scribe" means "a scholar of the sacred law." Being

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(1) Matthew 3, 2.

(3) *ibid.* 7, 29; Mark 1, 22.

(2) *ibid.* 3, 10.

(4) Mark 1, 27; Luke 4, 36.

expert annotators, these scribes would often come to the synagogues to read aloud and comment on the Bible, apparently in a very formal and dull way, and very particular about trifles. There was nothing in their talks that would make the law vibrant with life. Jesus often preached on the Sabbath in the synagogue of Capernaum in Galilee. To the ears of those who had been so used to the complicated and dry sermons of the scribes, his sermons sounded extremely fresh and appealing. They were such vital words that they inspired all who heard him. They may be called "the words of life" or "live words," if we call Buddha's "the words of wisdom" or "wise words."

However, Jesus' sermon described in the passage "He taught them as one having authority," was somewhat different from the sermons of religious fanatics and roaring prophets. True, Jesus often flung violent words at people. He said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away."<sup>(1)</sup> He also said, "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away."<sup>(2)</sup> On another occasion he urged them to make a resolute choice, saying, "No one can serve two masters."<sup>(3)</sup> But he did not tell it like fanatical prophets. He always remained free and cheerful in mind. While inducing them to make an uncompromising decision, he talked of the sun and the genial rain. While shaking their souls with words of ardor, he cast his eyes full of love on flowers, children, lilies of the field and birds of the air.<sup>(4)</sup> Even amid acute tensions, he let his mind affectionately linger on all creation, and his words were decorated with beautiful allegories. A sermon of this kind was naturally very far from being theoretical. It did not show a slightest sign of a man of reason trying to prove or teach something to another man of reason.

## 4

The tree is known by its fruit.<sup>(5)</sup> By observing the dis-

(1) Matthew 5, 29.

(2) *ibid.* 5, 30.

(3) *ibid.* 6, 24

(4) *ibid.* 6, 26-30.

(5) *ibid.* 7, 20; 12, 33.

ciples of both Buddha and Jesus, we can also tell to what kind of people their religions belonged, respectively.

Sariputta was a typical disciple of Buddha. According to an old sutra, Buddha once praised him, saying, "Sariputta is the one who justly drives the wheel of the *dharma* as Buddha has driven. If anyone talks of 'one being a Buddha's son, born from his mouth, born from the *dharma*, heir to the *dharma*,' Sariputta is the very first to win the title."<sup>(1)</sup> Together with Moggalana, Sariputta was once a disciple of a heathen ascetic. Both Moggalana and Sariputta encouraged each other in seeking the final solution, and promised to share the result mutually in case either of them found it. One day in the city of Rajagaha, Sariputta was deeply impressed with the sight of a *bhikkhu* begging food. Sariputta thought that the *bhikkhu* must be one of those who had attained wisdom, if there were any such men in the world. In his gait, in his eyes, and in his quiet yet dignified manner, he had no fault to find with. Who was the teacher of this man? What sort of teaching did he profess? Sariputta waited till he finished begging, approached, and asked questions. The *bhikkhu* answered, "I am a follower of Buddha." When Sariputta asked for information about his teachings, he apologized for being a novice and unable to tell much. What he only said is recorded in a sutra as follows:

Of all things which proceed from a cause,  
The *Tathagata* has explained the cause,  
And also has explained their ceasing.  
This the great Adept has proclaimed.<sup>(2)</sup>

This quatrain reveals something of the law of causality, and Sariputta could understand what the *bhikkhu's* teacher had taught, as soon as he heard it. The sutra describes that "he gained penetrating eyes for truth (*dharma*) at once." He told it to Moggalana, and both became followers of Buddha.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) *Majjhima-nikaya* 111 *Anupada-sutta*.

(2) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*, 1, 23, 5.

(3) *ibid.* I, 23, 1-5.

The circumstances leading to Sariputta's conversion show clearly what high culture and intelligence he had had already. Had he not been a man of excellent intelligence, it would have been entirely impossible for him to grasp what the quatrain meant. Besides, he and Moggallana belonged to the Brahman caste. They were thus distinguished both in birth and culture, and were typical of Buddha's disciples.

Both Buddha and Jesus said: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."<sup>(1)</sup> Jesus also said, "You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive."<sup>(2)</sup> The Buddhist term *ki* (degree of man's fitness for receiving the truth) also expresses what is meant here. Now, what sort of men have the "ears to hear" or a good *ki*?

Buddha's way is, in short, the way "to perceive with wisdom." "Fools filled with illusions and tied with passions" were far from his religion. It is difficult to approach this religion without intelligence, and to enter it without a contemplative spirit.

O *bhikkhus*! I preach how to extinguish the worldly passions of what we know and see. I don't tell you of what I do not know or see. Now *bhikkhus*! What is right knowledge and right observation that will enable us to extinguish the passions? It is those who have recognized the suffering of life that have really extinguished the passions.<sup>(3)</sup>

Thus preached Buddha, and the teaching contained the Four Noble Truths. It begins with the recognition of the bitterness of life, and then proceeds to the perception of its cause, the comprehension of the principle for overcoming it, and the actual means for overcoming it. However, those who neither know nor see have no means of overcoming the bitterness of life through this way. One must first of all know, if he wishes to follow the way. He must grasp the actuality of life through proper contemplation. He must then penetrate

(1) Matthew 11, 15; 13, 9; Mark 4, 23.

(2) *ibid.* 13, 14.

(3) *Itivuttaka* 102.

into the path to be followed, with a resolute will. Only those who were able to do these things were qualified to follow Buddha. Intelligence was the sole prophet, proper understanding the sole prayer, and the righteous *dharma* the sole guide for them. What kind of people was it that could follow such a teaching?

Buddha's order stressed the equality of all men. None was denied entrance into his order because of his caste or poverty. He did not like the caste system Brahmanism had set up. He said man could become a sage not by birth but by his own accomplishment.<sup>(1)</sup> The gate of his religion was thus wide open to all. Yet those who could actually go through it were inevitably limited to the few with "the eye to perceive and the ear to hear." Those who were weak in their power of observation, reflection, contemplation and practice could not enter it. Evidently the religion belonged to "the wise, and not to the fool." Therefore those who actually constituted the realm of early Buddhism were chiefly young, intelligent men of noble birth. This shows that his religion was solely for the reasoning men.

## 5

Jesus' disciples constituting the early Christian order were in marked contrast to their counterparts in the early Buddhist order.

Among Jesus' disciples, one comparable with Sariputta in position was Simon nicknamed *Kepba* (meaning stone, which was *Petros* in Greek). Jesus told Simon: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."<sup>(2)</sup> This man, the greatest of all of Jesus' disciples, had been a fisherman by the Sea of

(1) *Sutta-nipata* 3, 9, *Vasettha-sutta* 650.

(2) Matthew 16, 18-19.

Galilee. Soon after Jesus started preaching the gospel, Simon was casting a net into the sea and heard Jesus calling to him, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He abandoned his net, and followed Jesus at once.<sup>(1)</sup> Since, in Capernaum where he had been living, people had the habit to work, his being a fisherman did not necessarily mean that he was of humble birth. The utmost humbleness of the disciples emphasized by the preachers at church in order to enhance the wonderfulness of the origin of Christianity does not represent their true nature. Simon called Peter, seems to have been quite a prominent figure among his colleagues. However, it is clear that Jesus' disciples decidedly did not belong to the so-called noble class. And, to what we call intelligence or culture in the Greek sense, they were all perfect strangers. Here we cannot but find in Simon Peter a man entirely different from Sariputta, the first man of his day in intelligence, in birth, and in the practice of austerities.

And Peter was virtually a representative type of those who followed Jesus. They were all strangers to intelligence and refinement, and lived in a world quite different from that of the upper class. They formed a becoming audience for the parables of fishing, sowing, reaping, the fig tree, and so forth. Among them, Matthew and a few others occupied a social position slightly different from the rest. Matthew was a tax collector, and probably accustomed to writing. This is one of the reasons why Matthew is thought to have written a document that became the basis of the Gospel. But he was a petty official remote from the high tax surveyor called "publicani" in Rome. Tax collectors were never respected by others. They were despised just like murderers or highwaymen because of the nature of their occupation. Even the other writers of the Gospel placed them in the same category with sinners by saying, "many tax collectors and sinners came..."<sup>(2)</sup>

We find these aspects also in the Epistles of Paul. He wrote: "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise

(1) Matthew 4, 18-19.

(2) *ibid.* 9, 10.

according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."<sup>(1)</sup> It is also written: "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."<sup>(2)</sup> Such were the people that gathered around Jesus who preached the gospel and repentance. They were all naive, fragile in mind, with no intelligence. Not a bit of the elements of Greek culture could be found in them. However, they were full of warm feelings and good faith. Jesus' sermon on the kingdom of God could sink into the hearts of these people, uncultured but naive and honest, like the rain on a field of parched soil. Here we can see clearly the nature of Jesus' religion.

On one occasion someone brought a little child to Jesus that he should touch him. His disciples tried to interrupt it, but Jesus reprimanded them, saying: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."<sup>(3)</sup> And he took the child in his arms, put his hands upon him, and blessed him. Here again we can clearly see Jesus' view of man.

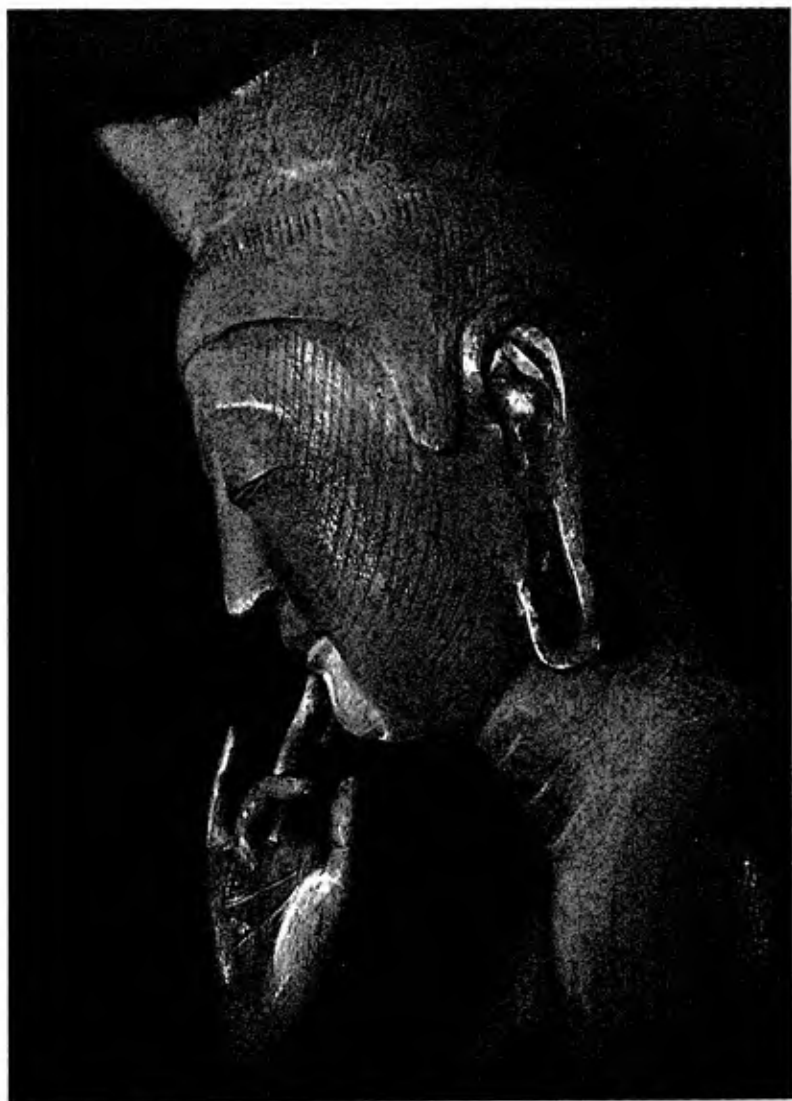
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(1) 1 Corinthians 1, 26.

(2) *ibid.* 1, 27.

(3) Mark 10, 14-15; Matthew 19, 14.





Maitreya, the future Buddha, of Koryuji; a type of  
Buddhist wisdom.





## PART II

### ON HAPPINESS

—"What should I Hope to be?"—

#### Chapter IV. The Way to Happiness

##### 1

To deny the earthly life of man—this was the substance of what Buddha and Jesus taught. To turn people's eyes from earthly pleasure; to make them trample down all worries of worldly life; to let them overcome secular futilities—such was the aim of the lifelong efforts of these two incomparably great sages. Buddha compared man's everyday life to the doings of monkeys romping without aim from branch to branch in the woods.<sup>(1)</sup> He warned the people saying that the pursuit of earthly desires could be likened to a man running against the wind with a torch of hay, the flame of which would burn him up presently unless he threw it away at once.<sup>(2)</sup> Jesus beckoned to the people to choose the narrow gate, saying, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."<sup>(3)</sup> This may be called pessimism or escapism by modern people who find no evil in earthly pleasures. But there is no doubt that these two great sages wanted us to turn from the gate wide open to destruction and proceed toward the strait gate leading to life.

What is an earthly pleasure? "Let us eat and drink, for

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(1) *Dhammapada* 334.

(2) *Majjhima-nikaya* 54 *Potaliya-suttanta*. cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* (The Medium-length Agama in Chinese) 203 (The Taisho Edition Vol. I, pp 773-4).

(3) Matthew 7, 13-14.

tomorrow we die.”<sup>(1)</sup> Is there no other way of life than this? If we could not think of God, or Buddha, or a nobler destiny of mankind, there would be nothing for it but to pray that today’s food and drink be more abundant and to make merry till our death tomorrow. The Old Testament says, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to dance.”<sup>(2)</sup> Is this what we call the reality of life or the pleasure of man? Can’t we think of any other way of life? Both Buddha and Jesus positively rejected such realities and pleasures of life. And they preached to us to lead a life of greater happiness.

Many many years have passed since they set their noble examples among mankind. Yet mankind is still sunk in deep secularity. According to Renan, mankind in its totality offers an assemblage of low beings, selfish, and superior to the animal only in that its selfishness is more reflective.<sup>(3)</sup> But Buddha and Jesus have testified to the possibility of a nobler destiny for man. The way has been pioneered. A great spiritual joy awaits mankind at the bright horizon beyond the mundane life denied by both of them.

## 2

Pointing at some flying birds, Jesus said to his disciples: “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”<sup>(4)</sup> Another time pointing at wild flowers he taught them a lesson with beautiful words: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”<sup>(5)</sup> And he preached with emphasis, “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘what shall we eat?’ or ‘what shall we drink?’ or ‘what shall we wear?’”<sup>(6)</sup> Man’s earthly concern comes first for abundance of food, clothing and shelter. Modern people regard it even as a fundamental human right to claim such needs.

(1) 1 Corinthians 15, 32; cf. Isaiah 22, 13. (2) *ibid.* 10, 7; cf. Exodus 32, 6.

(3) cf. Renan: *Vie de Jésus*, XXVIII. (4) Matthew 6, 26. (5) *ibid.* 6, 28-29

(6) *ibid.* 6, 31.

But Jesus taught that there is no need to worry about them nor to make efforts seeking after these things.

For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.<sup>(1)</sup>

These words of Jesus demanded evidently the abandonment of earthly concern, and the devotion to a single-minded life toward the kingdom of God.

The Gospel reports that Jesus called upon his disciples to cast away even their concern for family life.

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.<sup>(2)</sup>

He also declared:

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.<sup>(3)</sup>

Home is the last resort for our happiness on earth. Happiness in home is the very core of human life. Jesus, however, decidedly demanded the people to abandon their concern for home. Once he preached: "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple."<sup>(4)</sup> And he encouraged his disciples in this way:

And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.<sup>(5)</sup>

Of course such a thing as laying up treasures on earth for themselves was something Jesus' followers should never do. There were two reasons for this. One reason was shown in

(1) Matthew 6, 32-33.

(2) *ibid.* 10, 34-35.

(3) *ibid.* 10, 37-38.

(4) Luke 14, 26.

(5) Matthew 19, 29; Luke 18, 29-30.

these words: "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself."<sup>(1)</sup> Why must one worry about tomorrow and lay up treasures upon earth when one, having left everything to God's will, has no need to worry about what to eat, drink and wear? Besides, treasures laid upon earth tend to rivet our concern on them. That was the other reason why one should hate earthly treasures. Jesus said: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,"<sup>(2)</sup> and further, "You cannot serve God and mammon."<sup>(3)</sup>

Therefore, what Jesus meant by the "kingdom of God" was the kingdom of the poor (*ebionim*). One who had earthly treasures could not enter this kingdom. He taught that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. It follows then that it is happy to be poor, and unhappy to be rich. Jesus expressed this very clearly: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God,"<sup>(4)</sup> and, "Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation."<sup>(5)</sup> Stoic philosophers were known to be indifferent (*adiaphoros*) to earthly treasures. But in Jesus' eyes treasures laid up on earth were not only insignificant but also very harmful for those who long for the kingdom of God.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,....

but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.<sup>(6)</sup>

This was Jesus' conclusion in regard to earthly treasures.

Renan says in his *Life of Jesus*: "There never was a man, Sakyamuni perhaps excepted, who has to this degree trampled under foot family, the joy of this world, and all temporal care. Jesus only lived for his Father and the divine mission which he believed himself destined to fulfil."<sup>(7)</sup> This is an inevitable conclusion for anyone who open-heartedly reads the Gospel without any compromise with himself and earthly things.

(1) Matthew 6, 34.

(2) *ibid.* 6, 21.

(3) *ibid.* 6, 24.

(4) Luke 6, 20; cf. Matthew 5, 3,— "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

(5) *ibid.* 6, 24.

(6) Matthew 6, 19-20.

(7) Renan: *Vie de Jésus*. XXVIII.

## 3

The teachings of Buddha were even more uncompromising with earthly concerns. It is expressed best in the Buddhist mode of living called "homeless life."

An old sutra says that Buddha himself told his disciples, "I, who was young and filled with happiness and vigor, became a homeless wanderer apart from home life against my parents."<sup>(1)</sup> As these words show, his "Great Renunciation" meant, first of all, the renunciation of home life. Of course he was not without affection for his father and his wife and child. However, since he had seen the realities of mortal life he could not force himself to stay in a life of worldly love and desire. Needless to say, homeless life does not mean the renunciation of home life only. It is true that the sutra often speaks of "entering the life of a houseless wanderer apart from home life"; but to be apart from home life had to be construed to mean the throwing away of every earthly concern, of all property, and of all attachment.

The genius of homeless life lies in the effort to overcome human weakness through renunciation of all worldly concern. To be concrete, it is a life of "three robes and one bowl," which is the original mode of homeless life established by Buddha. It is the most direct representation of life in which one takes absolutely no thought for what to eat, drink and wear.

Relying on "one bowl" means begging, which is the basest of all worldly ways of living. A sutra says it is "the lowest of all living," but one did not enter such life without some good reason, and it was not because "one was forced by the king, or suffered from debts or want of living.... It is with reasonable cause that many good people come unto."<sup>(2)</sup> And why were eminent people willing to enter such a life of begging? It was because they believed that the way to human improve-

(1) *Majjhima-nikaya* 26 *Ariyapariyesana-sutta*; cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* (The Medium-length Agama in Chinese) 204 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 1, p. 776).

(2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 22, 80 *Pindolya*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 10, 16 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 72).

ment lay first of all in the control of desire. In home life one strives to be happy by satisfying one's desire, while in homeless life one tries to gain the calm of supreme happiness, no longer disturbed by earthly desire. Desire has a strange nature. It always demands to be fulfilled and is never satisfied. Buddha once said that man's desire would never be satisfied even with a heap of gold twice as high as the Himalayas.<sup>(1)</sup> Because of its nature, human desire and human misery will increase endlessly in a spiral climb. As a matter of course one who has seen this truth would try very hard to eradicate this spiral climb. Buddha taught us to do this by controlling desire with wisdom. This was the way to emancipation.

They own no more than three robes. This is the lowest standard of living in respect to clothing. Moreover, they are yellow robes (*kashaya*), made of old dingy cloth. It is poorest of clothing. And, needless to say, the aim of wearing *kashaya* is to control one's desire for clothing just as the aim of having one bowl is to control one's desire for food.

Moreover the homeless life has no shelter. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head,"<sup>(2)</sup> said Jesus. The Japanese *un-sui* (cloud and water) is a poetic expression of this homeless life. Both the floating cloud and the running water have no place to stop. The principle of the wanderer's life in Buddhism is not to settle down at any one place. Sometimes he may sleep in the shade of a tree. And sometimes he may sleep a comfortable sleep in a rich man's house. And yet he is not attached to either of them. He is even forbidden to stay under the same tree for more than three nights. And he leads the life of "cloud and water," earnestly seeking truth. The idea is to cut off one's attachment to shelter and to control one's desire for shelter.

Our worldly concern lies in rich food, fine clothes, and a comfortable house to live in. The homeless life demands that these concerns be all thrown away. The problem, after all,

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 4. 20 *Rajja*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 39, 18 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, pp. 288-9). (2) Luke 9, 58.

centers around wealth. Wealth is the very focus of earthly concern. Buddha urges us to cast aside such concern and to choose a life of poverty because greed and suffering live side by side. Nothing turns its back on the world so completely as this way. Jesus said that the kingdom of God is for the poor. Buddha said the way of emancipation is found in poverty. Jesus spoke of the need to lay up treasures in heaven.<sup>(1)</sup> Buddha taught people to forsake keeping treasures for themselves in a deep cellar, but to lay up merits for the sake of happiness "on the other side."<sup>(2)</sup> Jesus admonished us not to worry about the morrow. Buddha told us not to run after the past or long for the future, but to try our best to do what should be done today.<sup>(3)</sup> A latter-day Buddhist master expressed this idea thus: "Don't forget the present. The thing of greatest importance is the situation at this very moment." Here we can see a remarkable similarity between the teachings of these two great teachers in trying to make us overcome our vain desires on earth.

## 4

In this way they both trampled down earthly happiness under their feet. What did they want to offer mankind thereby? We must understand that it was also happiness itself.

Let us recall Pascal's words: "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves."<sup>(4)</sup> He is quite right. And on this point both Buddha and Jesus had the same idea.

Reading the Gospel you are sure to be greatly impressed by

(1) Matthew 6, 19-20.

(2) *Khuddaka-patha* 8 *Nidhikanda-sutta*.

(3) *Samyutta-nikaya* 10 *Aranne*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 36, 3 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, 260-1).

(4) Pascal: *Pensées*, 425 (Librairie Hachette, p. 518)



the fact that Jesus was always a preacher of man's happiness. The verses of the Sermon on the Mount beginning with the word "Blessed . . .," will especially give you a vivid impression of this. He says:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>(1)</sup>

And when Jesus taught people to lay up treasures not on earth but in heaven, what he pointed at was also a greater happiness. "Treasures laid up on earth will be damaged by moths and rust. Treasures laid up in heaven are subject to no such danger and are sure to bring you happiness."<sup>(2)</sup> Jesus also said that all necessary things would be added by God to those who earnestly sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness, instead of thinking about what to eat, drink and wear.<sup>(3)</sup> His speech implied that, moreover, great heavenly joy would be added to it all. Such sermons on happiness fill every page of the Gospel. Jesus came purposely in order to preach happiness. We can easily understand that for this reason the record of his deeds and words is called the book of evangelism (good and glad tidings), that is, the Gospel.

What Buddha preached ardently for forty-five years was, in the final analysis, also the way to real happiness. The homeless life of begging, the lowest of all living, might be regarded as being contrary to happiness. The wandering life like floating clouds and drifting waves might seem to be far from happi-

(1) Matthew 5, 1-12; cf. Luke 6, 20-26.

(2) *ibid* 6, 19-20.

(3) *ibid.* 6, 31-33.

ness. If Buddha was a seeker after happiness, why indeed was it necessary for him to renounce his noble life filled with happiness? You may well raise such a question. Indeed it was happiness that he sought after, but the happiness he strove to attain was the real happiness.

Penance and charity, discernment of the noble truths, and the realization of *nibbana*, this is the highest blessing.

He whose mind is not shaken or touched by the things of the world, free from sorrow, free from defilement, and secure, this is the highest blessing.

Those who, having done such, are undefeated in every respect, walk in safety everywhere, theirs is the highest blessing.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus taught Buddha in the *Mahamangala-sutta* (The Teachings on Great Happiness). Another time he said that he had sought a life of secure happiness and no trouble, for the worldly life he had renounced was, after all, a life of little happiness and much trouble. He told the people that it was better to lay up merits for a happy life "on the other side," than to hoard treasures in a hole, because that was indeed the way to a more lasting happiness which could not be deprived of by anyone. A Greek philosopher once said that he would vie with Zeus for happiness if he had only water and bread.<sup>(2)</sup> Now Buddha assured his disciples that they could secure happiness even greater than that of the *deva* (heavenly being) when they followed the life of "begging with one bowl."

As Pascal says, all men in this world seek after happiness. Jesus and Buddha were no exceptions. Buddha even went so far as to declare, "None seeks happiness more eagerly than I."<sup>(3)</sup> It was the essence of their teachings to tackle the problem of happiness and to seek for a way to secure it, giving up all illusions. Now, what were their views on the happiness they had attained? What were the means they used to secure it?

(1) *Sutta-nipata*, (S. B. E. Vol. X,) p. 43.

(2) The saying of Epicurus.

(3) *Zoitsu-agon-kyo* (The Gradual Agama in Chinese) 31, 5 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 719).

## Chapter V. Release and Salvation

## 1

All men long for happiness. Buddha and Jesus and their followers were no exceptions. Then why were their ways different from the worldly way? Why did they run in an opposite direction to the worldly way of happiness? Because, paradoxical though it may seem, they sought real happiness.

When asked if you are happy, not a few would reply, "yes." But man, fortunately or unfortunately, has the faculty of reflection. He looks back on the past, foresees the future, and watches himself as he is with his own eyes. It will be very hard to find any man who can declare he is happy when he looks at himself as he is. "I will say nothing against the course of my life," said Goethe once as an old man, "But at bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that during the whole of my 75 years, I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being."<sup>(1)</sup> We are surprised to hear these words from Goethe who is thought to have led a life far more beautiful and brilliant than most people. Isn't this a good reflection on the actuality of life?

This can be seen more clearly in the circumstances of Buddha's renunciation. He himself often spoke of his life before renunciation: "I was a young man blessed with clothing, food, and shelter. Youth and happiness were mine." And yet why did he renounce the world against his parents' wish in the springtime of life? It was because the life which was thought happy proved to be just the opposite upon reflection. His life, which he thought was filled with youth and happiness, was actually burdened with a mortal destiny. Recalling the moment Buddha said: "I felt as if my youthful blood were

(1) cf. W. James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 135. (Modern Library)

gone all of a sudden.”<sup>(1)</sup> Fontenelle, a French moralist, said, “Happiness is such a condition as we hope to last as it is.” When we become aware of our mortality, we cannot help being pitifully stripped of our mask of happiness. Meditating upon his life burdened with mortality, Buddha could not help concluding that life was inherently painful and unhappy. And he renounced the world. Seeking a way to real happiness, he left home to live a homeless life, casting away all false happiness.

## 2

I recollect here what Pascal declared in his *Pensées* on the relation between unhappiness and greatness of man: “It is being miserable to know oneself to be miserable; but it is also being great to know that one is miserable.” He said further, “A tree does not know itself to be miserable. A ruined house is not miserable. Man only is miserable.”<sup>(2)</sup> These words give suggestion on our present problem.

On reflection, human beings have proved to be unhappy. The veil of happiness has been torn off and our unhappiness is revealed before us because of this reflection. Then, is it better to live without such reflection? Some say we had better not be so anxious about the past and the future. The phrase “excess of consciousness,” often referred to nowadays, expresses the same idea.

What we call “Epicureanism” is nothing but one extreme of this way of thinking. The Epicureans say man may be unhappy on reflection, but happiness is the ultimate goal of man; and so it is best not to think of anything that will lead us to unhappiness. Don’t worry yourself uselessly, but enjoy your life as much as possible. This is the wisest way

(1) *Anguttara-nikaya* 3, 38; cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* (The Medium-length Agama in Chinese) 29 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 1, p. 607-8).

(2) cf. Pascal: *Pensées*, 397-399, (Librairie Hachette, p. 509).

to happiness, they declare. For example, the problem of death. People think of it, fear it, and worry about the life after death. They assert that all this is unnecessary. Epicurus, the classic representative of Epicureanism, says:

There is no death as long as we live. We don't exist if there is death. The wise are not afraid of death which people fear most.

Don't reflect on yourself. Don't worry. Enjoy your life as much as you can while you live. This idea was widespread among the people in the days of Paul. He wrote to his followers in Corinth: "If the dead are not raised 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.' Be not deceived."<sup>(1)</sup> There are not many who profess to be Epicureans. However, in actual life we find not a few who take side with Epicureanism.

The ways Buddha and Jesus taught were totally different from such a path to happiness. Neither sought to avoid penetrating behind the mask of false happiness, nor tried to paint out the crack from which unhappiness was peeking. They looked squarely at human unhappiness of their own accord. Instead of looking away from unhappiness, or turning their backs on it, they approached it, observed it, and brought it to light, with compassion. They did not deny that it was unhappy for man to know of his own unhappiness. And yet they did not think it conducive to the true solution to turn their eyes away from that unhappiness. They chose, in J. S. Mill's words, the way to become an unhappy Socrates rather than to become a happy pig. If there is unhappiness, let us look at it in the face and tackle it, in order to overcome it and rise above it. Therein lies human greatness along with human unhappiness, and greater human happiness together with human greatness. This is the way both Buddha and Jesus chose. And what Buddha found beyond human unhappiness was the peace in *nirvana*, and what Jesus found was the happiness in faith.

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(1) I Corinthians 15, 32-33; cf. Isaiah 22, 13.

## 3

From such a point of view, the fundamental structure of the teaching of Buddha may be said to consist in the recognition of suffering of all beings on this side and the recognition of the ultimate peace on that side. Life is sorrowful—this is the very starting point of his teachings. Their basic formula was the “Four Noble Truths.” The first truth is the “truth of suffering”: Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, and death is suffering. Association with the unpleasant is suffering, separation from the pleasing is suffering. Not to get what one wants is suffering. In short, suffering is universal among all human beings. The first four sufferings are those of birth, old age, sickness, and death, which are inevitable for all human beings. Therefore all counter-measures taken to evade them are useless. The following verses in the *Dhammapada* are filled with sorrow:

Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we  
enter the clefts of the mountains, is there known a spot  
in the whole world where death could not overcome the  
mortal.<sup>(1)</sup>

Once Buddha preached to the King of Kosala that these four sufferings were like huge rocky mountains, approaching us, trampling down all living things, and that, against it, armies and treasures of the king were of no use.<sup>(2)</sup> The last three sufferings are typical of our earthly life. Love causes the suffering of separation. Indignation causes the suffering of association with the unpleasant. Desire causes the suffering of disappointment when one cannot get what one wants. In short all these sufferings are caused by secular attachment. It is not until this fact has been grasped thoroughly that we can stand on the starting point of Buddha's

(1) *Dhammapada* 128. (S. B. E. Vol. X, p. 35)

(2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 3, 25 *Pabbatupama*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 42, 3 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 334).

teachings.

*Nirvana* is taught as the goal of his way. It means a state in which the flame of all desire has died out forever like the wind which has gone down. The expression is a negative one, and many other words denoting the same state are mostly in a negative form, too. Indian thoughts tend toward negative expressions. The state of *nirvana* in particular cannot but be described negatively because of its unworldly nature. So, there arises the danger of taking it as a negative state of mind. Then how can we grasp its positive meaning? Going beyond the wording of the sutra, we can see there the supreme freedom of mind. According to Buddha, all life is interdependent; all phenomena are impermanent; and all beings are egoless. But people fail to grasp this truth of life. They are apt to think that there exists "I," fixed and immutable. Immutable things are sought in the mutable, and self is sought amid the egoless beings. Here arises an inevitable friction between the demands of man and the reality of life. This is the reason why we cannot get what we want; and we must grow old and die while we seek immortality. Life on this side is therefore painful, distressful, sorrowful, uncomfortable, and heteronomous. Release lies in getting rid of this misinterpretation of life, and *nirvana* is the free state of mind without pain, distress, or sorrow. All illusory and heteronomous things of this side are annihilated and a free world of wisdom is established on the other side. An old sutra says, "One well versed in his desires is always free."<sup>(1)</sup> Thus what Buddha taught was the way of penetrating into the unhappiness on this side, and crossing it over to the happy and free life on the other side.

#### 4

The basic structure of Jesus' teaching may be said to consist of sin and death on this earth, and an everlasting life in heaven.

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 1, 81 *Arana*.



Jesus finds this world wrong and perverse: a world in which Satan rules, the righteous shed tears, hypocrisy is powerful, and few give ears to God's words. Jesus said once, "This adulterous and sinful generation."<sup>(1)</sup> Another time he deplored, "O faithless and perverse generation."<sup>(2)</sup> And yet the people never thought of their wickedness nor their bondage to sin. Therefore he once said unto the multitudes:

But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, "We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."<sup>(3)</sup>

Jesus was firm in the belief that the kingdom of heaven and the Day of Judgement were near at hand. The plain purport of his preaching was that one should repent at once and prepare for that day of judgement to obtain everlasting life in heaven. Then, what is everlasting life in heaven? Or, what is the suffering in Gehenna? We cannot get a detailed explanation about them in Jesus' preaching. This is because all is belief and not theory. And there is the long tradition of Israel as the background of his belief. Standing on this background he put forth his pure belief in fresh expressions that penetrated into people's minds. There flew out of him the "words of life." Therefore to those who lived in the tradition of Israel and listened to his words of life, it was unnecessary for him to explain what the suffering in Gehenna or the everlasting life in the kingdom of God meant. Accordingly we have to turn to Paul who spread the gospel among foreigners for the first time, if we want to seek some theory on this subject.

Paul said that all men were sinners unless they were made righteous by faith because they were "carnal, sold under sin."<sup>(4)</sup> "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."<sup>(5)</sup> His epistle to the Romans is filled with sorrowful self-reflections:

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(1) Mark 8, 38.

(2) Luke 9, 41.

(3) Matthew 11, 16-17.

(4) Romans 7, 14.

(5) *ibid.* 7, 19.



Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind of making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am!(<sup>1</sup>)

And he says that all men are necessarily burdened with sin, the price of which is death. Therefore all men are mortal, and the world of such people is, needless to say, unhappy.

But can't they be saved from such a state of unhappiness? The standpoint of Paul and Christianity in general is that the possibility of salvation is not found on their own side.

Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.(<sup>2</sup>)

Those who have no power to save themselves are saved only by the grace of God, which was brought by the atonement of Jesus, and is manifested in the believers of Christ. Paul expressed this by the phrase: "being justified by faith." Man who has sinned and fallen into the hands of death can escape from the great power of sin and death and overcome it forever by believing in Jesus. The secret lies in the love of God, the atonement of Christ, and the faith of its believers. It was preached: "You have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature."(<sup>3</sup>) It was also said: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."(<sup>4</sup>) "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."(<sup>5</sup>) Dread is gone for ever, and joy and peace fill the soul. Doubt having completely vanished, gratitude to God and goodwill to his brothers occupy one's mind. This may be called true happi-

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(1) Romans 7, 20-24

(2) *ibid.* 3, 23-24.

(3) Colossians 3, 9-10.

(4) Galatians 2, 20.

(5) II Corinthians 5, 17.

ness, or freedom, or life. The way Jesus indicated was to die in an unhappy man on earth and be reborn as a happy one in Christ.

Then there arise the questions, "How was Jesus able to acquire such a view of happiness?" and "How was Buddha able to acquire his own?" Let me dwell on them for a while in the next chapter.

Chapter VI. The Way to *Nirvana* (Freedom)

## 1

Every man possesses reason. But what matters is whether or not he is willing to cultivate and use it with the belief that it is a power that elevates and guides him. Paul deplored that "the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to dance." Here it is not worth our while to pay attention to those who are concerned with eating, drinking, and pleasure only. However, even among those thoughtful people who ponder over the destiny of mankind and worry about what their way of life should be, the stand they take is not always the same. Generally speaking, they can be divided into two groups according to their way of thinking. One is the group of those who answer in the affirmative as to the power of reason. They believe that it is thinking that makes man great. They say that, when they know and think rightly, there they will find man's joy, man's pride, and man's betterment. "Man should have reason, or else, he should have a hanging cord." This passage of Diogenes sounds rather funny, but, because he too found man's supreme pride in the function of reason, he said the man without reason had better kill himself. Here we find one who belongs to the first group.

Those who belong to the other group shake their heads, and answer sorrowfully in the negative, objecting to those of the first group. What could man know and think with his reason? His knowledge is pitifully limited. Isn't his judgement always very distorted? The true function of reason is to rightly admit what should be admitted. And what reason should necessarily admit is: "how many kingdoms know us not!"<sup>(1)</sup> It is ridiculous to think that it is in man himself that there is

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(1) Pascal: *Pensées*, 207, (Librairie Hachette, p. 428).

something upon which one really can depend. Thus they mercifully try to rob man of even his last pride. It reminds us of Paul's words: "Claiming to be wise, they became fools."<sup>(1)</sup> Man is urged to become aware of his foolishness in order to become wise.

Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness,' and again, 'The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.'<sup>(2)</sup>

The epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, from which the above is quoted, still impresses us deeply with irresistible force today.

Now, which side should we take? No one can give the final answer. That may be possible only for the man who happens to be alive on the farthest days of mankind. The only thing we can say now is that, among the most eminent people we have had, Buddha taught his teachings upon the conviction of the power of reason, while Jesus walked the way abandoning the power of reason. Therefore, if a choice has to be made between the two ways, it will have to be made with one's whole body and soul.

## 2

Buddha's teaching is composed of two contrasting elements, the sorrowful human being on this worldly side and the happy being of ultimate peace on the other side. I have explained to a certain extent the human being as he is on this side, and as he could be on that side. Then, by what means can man achieve his goal? Buddha found the key in reason. He placed all the heavy responsibility of realizing the transition from this side to that side on man's reasoning power. And he himself realized the way, and invited others, saying, "Ye also

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(1) Romans 1, 22.

(2) I Corinthians 3, 18-20.

come!" Among all the lessons Buddha taught to mankind, nothing is more impressive than the lesson of "self-reliance" which is said to have been given to his disciple Ananda right before his great death.

Therefore, O Ananda, be ye islands unto yourselves. Take the self as your refuge. Take yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast as a refuge to the *dhmma* as an island. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves.<sup>(1)</sup>

Here Buddha's viewpoint is declared most definitely. What one should depend on is himself and the *dhmma* he has mastered. When he has controlled himself properly and mastered the *dhmma* well with what is in himself, he then becomes his sole lamp and refuge himself. It is of no use for any man to try to find his refuge elsewhere. So teaches Buddha. As one sows, so one reaps. Any result we obtain being the fruit of our own deeds, we cannot think of relying on anything else but ourselves. It is I that can save myself and bring happiness to myself. Even if there were God, what is the use? Whatever others may do, what has that to do with me?

Called on by King Pasenadi of Kosala, Buddha said, "You should reflect upon this: Supposing that huge rocks were rolling down from east, west, south and north, killing all lives and bearing down upon you, what should you do then? Your efficient troops, large amounts of wealth, and the incantations of your ministers would not help you. And the huge rocks are not a mere fable. It is mortality such as old age, illness and death that is bearing down upon you. You must first think what you should do."<sup>(2)</sup> The king being a layman and not a *bhikkhu*, Buddha urged him to do good and prepare for the future life. If he had been an ordained *bhikkhu*, right knowledge and release would have been explained instead. Which-ever it might be, in the way of Buddha, the ultimate refuge

(1) *Digha-nikaya*, 16, *Mahapariniṣṣana-suttanta*, 2, 26.

(2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 3, 25 *Pabbatupama*.

was to be sought in oneself and nowhere else. It says in the *Dhammapada*:

Self is the lord of self;

Who else could be the lord?

With self well controlled,

A man finds a lord such as few can find.<sup>(1)</sup>

However, it is not the small self steeped in secularity that should be our sole refuge. Such is the self to be denied. It is burdened with the bitterness of life, full of dirt, and unhappy, consequently unfit to be rested upon. Of course, there is no other self besides this self. But this self as it is now will not be able to become an ultimate refuge. For the self must die in order to be reborn, and must live anew with all the past taken away. Jesus said the gate was narrow. Zen Buddhists explain it as "the great path without any gate." At any rate it is a gate of "denial" to all human beings. Whether to pass it or not is up to the choice of each one, but the way will not be opened anew to those who refuse to pass. It is only to those who have resolutely passed it that a new way will unfold itself. There one finds a new way for himself, though he is unchanged externally. The path to the so-called "well controlled self" spoken of in the *Dhammapada* can be developed thereupon. Then how well is the self controlled that would become one's refuge?

### 3

"What a ridiculous hero!"<sup>(2)</sup> wrote Pascal once. He had tried to find man's dignity and greatness in man's faculty of reasoning. And yet he knew quite well that this faculty could be disturbed easily.

The noise of a cannon is not necessary to hinder its thoughts. Do not wonder if at present it does not reason well; a fly is buzzing in its ears. *O ridicolosissimo eroe!*<sup>(3)</sup> It sounds as if he were sneering at his own experience one

(1) *Dhammapada*, 160 (S. B. E. Vol. X). p. 45.

(2) *O ridicolosissimo eroe!*

(3) Pascal: *Pensées*, 366.

day. Perhaps he has sneered at all mankind through it. Man surely deserves that sneer. But what we must not forget is that it is not only the fly's buzzing and the cannon's roaring that disturb man's right reasoning. A dreadful disturber of man's reasoning lives within himself, rather than outside.

This inner disturber was called *pathos* (passion) by Greek philosophers. Paul called it carnal mind. When there arises passion in man's mind, he can hardly keep his reason working freely. So long as the carnal mind captivates him, he does evil before he knows it in spite of his ardent desire to do good. Then what measures should we take against this inner disturber? It is by no means easy to give an answer. What all the ancient saints and philosophers struggled painfully for was, after all, to answer this question. Flies buzzing around our ears can be driven away. As to the cannons' roaring, we can keep away from it. But we cannot drive away the passion excited in our minds. There is no means of keeping it away. To human beings there is no problem more terrible and difficult than this one. Anyone who reads the *Confessions* of Augustine will discover how terrible this inner disturber is. Passions had been excited in himself and the carnal mind had got hold of him tight. Seeing this struggle of soul and flesh in Augustine himself, the reader will find it almost impossible to breathe. In the end, he had to cry for salvation from the abyss he had fallen into. "There is no other means for man than to know his weakness, and cling to God, being tired out."<sup>(1)</sup> This was his conclusion. Man is weak. If he depends on his own power, he can hardly overcome the disturber. With this conviction, he chose the way of Christ.

There is another approach of paramount importance to this problem. It is that man can overcome the disturber by the light he has in himself, that is, his reasoning faculty. This was also the answer Greek philosophers had given. It was this answer that Buddha had found himself and taught his followers. The basic state of the mind of the wise which had

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(1) Augustinus: *Confessiones*, VII, 18.

been pictured by the Stoics was called *apatheia*. It is an inner state literally free from passion. The disturber has been overcome, and there is nothing left to disturb the peace of mind. Reason alone is awake. He is surprised at and afraid of nothing.<sup>(1)</sup> He is free even if he is in chains. He is a monarch even if he lives a begger's life. Here we see the answer of those who are confident of the ultimate victory of reason.

Buddha, too, had seen the powerful and persistent inner disturber. *Klesa* (disturbing desire) was the name given to it. He observed it, analyzed it, unravelled its substance, discovered where it came from, and at last found a way to overcome it, and preached the way to his followers. In point of keenness of pursuit, minuteness of procedure, and thoroughness of guidance, Buddha's teachings were far beyond comparison with the Stoics' and deserved to be called the greatest treasure of mankind.

A sutra records the following dialogue between Sariputta and a wanderer of a different school.

Reverend Sariputta, you talk of *nirvana* so often, but what is *nirvana*?

My friend, we call no desire, no anger, no foolishness *nirvana*.

And is there any way to realize it?

My friend, there is a way to realize it. There is a way to go.

Then, Reverend, what is the way to realize it? What is the way to go?

My friend, the Holy Eightfold Path is the way of realizing *nirvana*; it is composed of right view, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right living, right effort, right concentration, and right meditation. This is the way to realize *nirvana*. It is a good way, and deserves our hard work.<sup>(2)</sup>

What Buddha had preached for forty-five years was, after all, the insight into the true nature of this mundane life, and

(1) "Nil admirari nil meture." (2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 38, 1, *Nibbana*.



the ways to realize *nirvana*. These ways taught by Buddha are said to number thirty-seven. He taught many ways as occasion demanded, but all of them have a common basic principle.

They are right ways, not crooked ones. A right way means a way that follows right reason. It is neither against reason nor beyond reason. It is a way such as every reasoning being must finally admit that it is right. It is not a prayer, not an incantation, not a supernatural way, nor a way depending on other authorities. It is a way of preserving reason's victory over man's inner disturber by his inner light, that is reason. This is a basic principle of the ways Buddha taught; and all these ways can be called Right Paths, since they are based on this principle.

The second principle is: "Right Path is middle path." The middle path is philosophically a way free from the two extremes, the affirmation and the negation of existence. It is backed up by the law of causality. From a practical point of view, it is a way free from the two extremes of asceticism and Epicureanism. Buddha perceived through his experience and wisdom that extreme asceticism was attached to mere ascetic deeds, and extreme Epicureanism to mere epicurean deeds. Rejecting these two extremes Buddha took the middle path as his stand. The middle path, as a matter of fact, does not mean a mathematic "middle." It is the very attitude to follow a right course, discerning errors of the extremes. Accordingly, it is a way to overcome the inner disturber through a right approach based on the conquest of the two extremes. It is, therefore, not a negative way but a most positive and splendid way.

However, it is by no means easy to take such a positive middle path. Man is apt to turn right or left. It is man's weakness to prefer extremes. It is difficult to overcome this weakness and remain in the middle path. And, after all, it is a path we ourselves must realize. What we can rely on is ourselves only. Without beseeching God, or invoking God's aid, we can only depend on our inner light, on the teaching of

Buddha, and on the encouragement from those who are walking the same way. Tremendous effort is needed to overcome the disturbing desire and win the ultimate peace, following this path. Buddha once compared the disturbing desire to vines.<sup>(1)</sup> The vines bud out afresh as soon as we cut them. Likewise, the flame of the disturbing desire spurts out again as soon as it is put out. Formidable disturber! Deplorable enemy! Not even for a moment must we relax our effort to destroy it. Only sustained effort and diligence can win the victory.

Buddha once said:

*Bhikkhus*, for example, various are the footprints of those who walk, but they can be comprehended in that of the elephant, and that is the biggest. Like this, many as the ways are, they have diligence as their foundation. Therefore, among all the good, diligence is the greatest, and the most supreme. *Bhikkhus*, thus the diligent can be expected to work out the eightfold right path and realize it without fail.<sup>(2)</sup>

Here is another important principle of Buddha's way. That is why the following, Buddha's last words, have to be appreciated all the more.

Then, *bhikkhus*, decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your own freedom with diligence.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) *Dhammapada* 340; cf. *ibid* 338.

(2) *Samyutta-nikaya* 45, 140 *Pada*.

(3) *Digha-nikaya* 16, *Mahāparinibbana-suttanta* 6, 7.

## Chapter VII. The Way to Salvation

### 1

To detach himself from the worldly suffering on this side, and to attain the ultimate peace on that side, Buddha had reasoning power, that light within man. This was called *buddhatva* (the nature of Buddha) or *jnana* (wisdom). It corresponds to the 'logos,' or 'nous,' or 'sophia' of the Greek. Buddha was confident of this, and by its unshadowed light he found the way from this side encumbered with the lust of flesh to that side blessed with *nirvana*. In contrast to this, for Jesus, in order to die in "the adulterous generation" where Satan reigns, and to live in "the generation to come" where God reigns, human reason had to be abandoned. This can be clearly understood through what he said when he held a little child in his arms:

For to such belongs the kingdom of God. Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.<sup>(1)</sup>

There is nothing at all which makes us suspect that Jesus might have thought that Greek *sophia* was something that could be added to God's glory, like the later scholastics did. His way was decidedly that of the so-called foolish, not of the wise. In this sense Jesus' way was quite antipodal to that of Buddha.

However, there is no noticeable criticism nor warning against Greek wisdom in what Jesus said himself. This is not to be wondered at because he had little wisdom either in or about himself. A thorough investigation has revealed that Jesus might not have known Greek, and had no knowledge of Greek civilization. Thus he did not have any Greek wisdom in him-

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(1) Mark 10, 14-15.

self to fight against. Judea, where he had been living, was not out of the influences of Greek wisdom; but in that country, these influences were not welcomed. "He who rears swine and he who teaches his son Greek science"<sup>(1)</sup> were equally cursed. The study of Greek studies was regarded as dangerous and even servile. It is said that a very learned master, being asked the most suitable time to study Greek wisdom, suggested that it be studied at that time when it was neither day nor night; since it was written of the Law: "You shall study laws day and night."<sup>(2)</sup> Under such circumstances it was not necessary for Jesus to assert expressly his standpoint against Greek wisdom. He had only to teach one thing: righteousness of mind. He had only to preach: "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."<sup>(3)</sup> Criticism and warning against Greek wisdom began to be heard for the first time in the days of Paul. He could speak Greek, and had Roman citizenship. He was a cultured Jew. His Semitic name was Saulos while his Roman name was Paulos. He had two names and spoke two languages, and lived, as it were, in two worlds: Jewish faith and Greek culture. He lived under circumstances quite different from those of Jesus and his other followers. The destiny of this apostle to the gentiles had been prepared for him before he became aware of it. To be a true apostle to the gentiles, however, two worlds in himself, Christian faith and Greek wisdom had to be confronted with each other. He even had to speak his final words on the relations between the two for those who listened to him in Greece and Rome. He said in an epistle to the Romans:

Claiming to be wise, they became fools.<sup>(4)</sup>  
In an epistle to the Corinthians he wrote:

Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) cf. Renan: *Vie de Jésus*, III.

(4) Romans 1, 22.

(2) cf. *ibid.*

(3) Mark 10, 15.

(5) I Corinthians 3, 18-19.

Again he wrote in the same epistle:

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.<sup>(1)</sup>

Jesus once blamed the scribes and Pharisees: "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign."<sup>(2)</sup> Paul said on the other hand: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Gentiles."<sup>(3)</sup> We may say that the standpoint of the way of faith in contrast to that of wisdom has been described here very clearly.

## 2

Then why did the way of wisdom have to be given up here? The reason given by both Jesus and Paul was a practical, not a theoretical one. The reflection on how man should conduct himself was the ground on which the Christian viewpoint stood. Sternness of conscience was the principle leading to its conclusions.

A young man called on Jesus and asked: "Master, what good thing should I do, that I may have eternal life?" He said unto him: "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."<sup>(4)</sup> There is no one who can be said "he is good" except God. It is ridiculous for man to discuss and preach good. Thus taught Jesus. What is hidden behind these words is a tremendous sternness of conscience. But the young man did not understand what Jesus meant. He said: "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said unto him: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Upon hearing these words the young man went

(1) I Corinthians 1, 20-21.

(2) Matthew 16, 4.

(3) I Corinthians 1, 22-23.

(4) Matthew 19, 17.

away sorrowfully, for he had great possessions.<sup>(1)</sup> He might have been a good man according to the standard of this world, but his self-examination was not rigorous enough. He dared to say coolly that he was keeping the commandments, one of which runs: "love your neighbor as yourselves," with no regard at all for the poor in spite of his huge wealth. His conscience had been spoiled. A selfish motive had deceived him. Unless one can cast away his selfish motive and face the rigorous trial of conscience, and can say that "no one is good but one," it is impossible for him to declare that he has attained the stand on which Jesus stood.

Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount:

You have heard that it was said, 'you shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.<sup>(2)</sup>

Reflecting on oneself as rigorously as this, who can declare that he has never disobeyed the commandment? Jesus said further:

You have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.... For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?....and if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others?<sup>(3)</sup>

If it is necessary to go that far, who can say that he has done good? The following happened after Jesus had gone up to Jerusalem:

The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?' This they said to test him, that they might have some charge

(1) cf. Matthew 19, 20-22.

(2) *ibid.* 5, 27-28.

(3) *ibid.* 5, 43-47.

to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.'<sup>(1)</sup>

His tone might have been very calm when he said that anyone without sin might be the first to throw a stone at the woman, but his words must surely have impressed and moved them deeply. No, it is not only they, but even we of today are impressed and moved by his words. We may be able to make a step forward toward understanding Christianity when we realize that we are not qualified either to throw a stone at the woman.

### 3

In Christianity the problem was not that of human essence (*essentia*), but that of human existence (*existentia*). It was not an attitude of one enjoying contemplation, but that of one who weeps over one's sinful behavior. This is clearly seen in Paul who said, "Wretched man that I am!"<sup>(2)</sup> In his epistle to the Romans he describes the "wretched man" as follows:

For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil

(1) John 8, 3-11.

(2) Romans 7, 24.



lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?<sup>(1)</sup>

Paul said that both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God."<sup>(2)</sup> When he said "mind," he meant something indicated by the word "*nous*" in Greek. To the Greeks, it meant reason, the essence of mind, or the guide within man. By virtue of this essential element, man could for the first time be differentiated from other beings. It was thought that by it instinct (*orexis*) could be elevated to will (*boulesis*), and opinion (*doxa*) to scientific cognition (*episteme*). The so-called *Buddhatva* (the nature of Buddha) or *jnana* (wisdom) in Buddhism expresses the same thing. Here we find the way of philosophy and the way of Buddhism which make this the last refuge of man. Paul, however, examining it in the light of actual human existence, saw "another law at war with the law"<sup>(3)</sup> of his mind.

Then why is man such a sorrowful and wretched being? The reason was given only mythically by Paul:

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man.... Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.<sup>(4)</sup>

Adam's sin has brought sin to all human beings. The explanation is mythical, but what is meant is man's undeniable tendency for evil. When we look at human beings as they are in the light of our stern conscience, we cannot help finding this tendency for evil. Man is destined to sin, because he is burdened with sin from his birth. This is the theory of "man's inherent evil." Hellenism and Buddhism, attaching importance to human essentiality, are ways leading to the

(1) Romans 7, 18-24.

(2) *ibid.* 3, 10-11.

(3) *ibid.* 7, 23.

(4) *ibid.* 5, 12-14.



theory of "man's inherent good." In contrast to this, Hebraism and Christianity, attaching importance to human actuality, are ways leading to the theory of "man's inherent evil." There is no limit to man's degeneration if there were no salvation of God. None can pick up a stone when told that he without sin shall throw a stone at a sinful woman. Man has to admit that there is none righteous, and none that does good. Here lies the futility of man who cannot but bow low, saying, "You are all, and I am nothing," compared with the perfectness of the "Father which is in heaven." And it is when we are completely "subjected to futility"<sup>(1)</sup> of the creature that we are really ready to start on the way of Paul and Jesus.

## 4

The fundamental structure of "The Way to Salvation" thus brought to mankind by Jesus can be explained as follows.

The starting point is the realization of the "futility of the creature." It is the most humble state of mind. Here one even gives up the idea of "superiority of reason," the last pride man can have; he is not "proud"<sup>(2)</sup> but he only fears, trembles, grieves, and suffers. Such a one is qualified for this way. What, however, must be noted is that in this religion, the realization of the futility of the creature, or the abandonment of reason do not come through one's self-effort, but by the help of other power. Paul says: "For the creature was subjected to futility, not of his own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope."<sup>(3)</sup> Looking for similar expressions in Buddhism, we find one in the *Tannisho*, which says, "by the guidance of Amida Buddha."<sup>(4)</sup> Why does one have to think in that way? It is because when he becomes aware of human futility, he, the subject of this realization has already abandoned all his power. For that reason there is only grief, and in the midst of lamentation, there arises a desperate longing for salvation.

(1) Romans 8, 20.

(2) cf. Romans 11, 20.

(3) Romans 8, 20

(4) *Tanni-sho* (The Sayings of Shinran) 6.

It is then that man becomes one "with ears to hear." Jesus often said: "He who has ears, let him hear."<sup>(1)</sup> He also said: "Hearing they do not hear."<sup>(2)</sup> Every man has ears. But why is it that some have "ears to hear," and others "hearing they hear not?" The ear means, doubtlessly, an "ear" opened to the gospel and an "ear" shut to it. Sitting by the seaside, Jesus once preached to the multitude in parables:

A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.<sup>(3)</sup>

And he concluded his sermon with the words: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." After the multitudes were gone, Jesus answered his disciples who had asked what he had meant, saying:

When any one hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and

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(1) Matthew 13, 9.

(2) *ibid.* 13, 13.

(3) *ibid.* 13, 3-8.

in another thirty.<sup>(1)</sup>

And he blessed his disciples, saying: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."<sup>(2)</sup> Paul, expressing a similar blessing to his disciples in Corinth, said: "You are God's field, God's building."<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore, he who has ears to hear is, in other words, he who will be a good "God's field" capable of bearing good fruit when the seed of God's gospel is sown. And such a good "God's field" is nothing but a mind that has admitted the futility of all creatures.

The gospel is preached to the "ears to hear"; to this good "God's field" God's words are brought by the sowers. And hearing at once turns into believing. Nothing intervenes between hearing and believing. We do not believe because we can understand what we hear. We are not made to believe by the irresistible force of what we have heard. All is abandoned in myself. "Ye are all, and I am nothing. I will have already bowed low before I am overcome by what I have heard." To such a man with good "ears to hear," hearing cannot but become believing at once. We must realize the importance of the following line from Paul's epistle to the Romans: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."<sup>(4)</sup>

It is then that we become those who "have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature."<sup>(5)</sup> An old man laden with sin dies, and a new one in Jesus is born anew. This conception is expressed best in the following line in Paul's epistle to the Galatians: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."<sup>(6)</sup> This is the so-called "newly-born." It is expressed also as follows: "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."<sup>(7)</sup> Because the old have passed away with the burden of sin and death, the new are free from the laws of sin and death, and there remain

(1) Matthew 13, 19-23.

(2) *ibid.* 13, 16.

(3) I Corinthians 3, 9.

(4) Romans 10, 17.

(5) Colossians 3, 9-10.

(6) Galatians 2, 20.

(7) II Corinthians 5, 17.

only life and peace. God's words are accomplished. Salvation is done. We may conclude that such is the fundamental structure of "The Way to Salvation" preached by Jesus.

## 5

Here we cannot help recalling that there is even in Buddhism a "Way to Salvation" with the same structure as that of Christianity. It is the way of the so-called "Pure Land Sect" of Buddhism founded by Honen and intensified by Shinran.

The starting point here is also the realization of the futility of man. There we see "a man with blind eyes, capable of doing nothing,"<sup>(1)</sup> according to Honen, and "a man destined for hell, with nothing in his reach,"<sup>(2)</sup> according to Shinran. In other words, it is the realization of man as "sinful and avaricious."<sup>(3)</sup> Buddha, confident of our inner character, has shown us a way from this side with lust and delusion to that side of ultimate peace. That was the "Sacred Way" to enlightenment. However, being convinced of his "sinful and avaricious" nature, there was nothing for Honen to do but to abandon the Sacred Way as "out of his reach" and "impossible to go."<sup>(4)</sup> It is abandonment of reason. It is a surrender to the "futility of man."

For such human beings as described above, the only way left is the one in which hearing at once becomes believing. In Buddhist terms it is called "faith through hearing" in contrast to "faith through understanding." Here we don't believe because we understand the *dharma* and become confident of it. This is powerfully expressed in the following words of Shinran.

There is nothing else in me than to believe what my master (Honen) says.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) Honen: *Ojo-taiyo-sho* (The Outline of the Way to Salvation).

(2) *Tanni-sho* (The Sayings of Shinran) 2. (3) *ibid.* 1.

(4) *Jodo-syu-ryaku-sho* (The Resume of the Jodo Sect).

(5) *Tanni-sho* 2.

"Whether adoration of Amida Buddha is the seed of happy life after death, or a cause of falling into hell, I do not know at all," said Shinran. It is not a faith attained through rationality. He has already given up his reason. It is out of the question for him to believe through "understanding." To believe through "hearing" is the only way there is. Elaborating on these circumstances, Shinran said: "Hearing reveals faith." None has ever penetrated into the importance of hearing so intensely as Shinran.

The idea of being "born in the Pure Land" as advocated by Honen and Shinran is comparable to that of "newly born" of Jesus and Paul, and the oral "adoration of Amida Buddha" of the former is comparable to the "confession of faith" in the religion of the latter. The two at first sight seem to be entirely dissimilar to each other because of their divergent ways of expression and different historical traditions, but a thorough study of their essentialities will unexpectedly disclose that they are the same in their fundamental structure.

# PART III

## ON FAITH

—“What should I Rely upon?”—

### Chapter VIII. On Faith in Buddhism

1

What is faith? What is it to believe? When we, with these questions in our hands, knock at the doors of the two great religions, Buddhism and Christianity, we will find there various ways of faith quite different from each other. Nevertheless, they can be reduced to two types: “faith through understanding” and “faith through person”, as the old Buddhist terminology puts it.

Faith through understanding is to listen to a teaching, understand it, and then come to a decision that there is no other teaching than this on which one can depend. Thereupon one becomes converted, and fervently tries to follow the teaching. He no longer looks to right and left, but turns to one direction, single-minded. This state of mind is faith. A sutra says: “*Bodhisattva* (Buddha-to-be), at his first conversion, earnestly seeks *bodhi* (wisdom) and is too firm to be moved.”<sup>(1)</sup> This is the faith through understanding. His faith is firm and intense, based on understanding and conviction.

A commentary on a sutra explains this faith thus: “As soon as one reaches mud when digging a well, one may assume that water is near at hand though one has not seen it yet.”<sup>(2)</sup> This is an ingenious description of what the faith through

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(1) *Kegon-kyo* (Avatamsaka-sutra in Chinese) 6, (The Taisho Edition Vol. 9, pp. 432-3).

(2) *Dainichi-kyo-sho* (A Commentary of Mahavairocanaabhisambodhi-sutra in Chinese) 3, (The Taisho Edition Vol. 39, p. 614).

understanding should be. The understanding of the teaching and the subsequent faith in it do not as yet mean that the way to ultimate freedom has been accomplished. Rather, the way to release (*vimukti*) and freedom (*nirvana*) starts from this point. His pick has only reached the mud in the course of his well-digging. But, by seeing the mud soaked with water, he is convinced that it will not be long before he can find a fountain of clear water if he digs on. There is no need to waver. He has only to go on digging in the same direction. He has thus attained the conviction that he will reach his goal if he only sticks to the way he is taught, earnestly and diligently.

Such is the faith through understanding. A long path of single-minded devotion starts after this stage has been reached. A well-known Buddhist saying goes: "Faith enables man to enter the great ocean of Buddhism."<sup>(1)</sup> It is then that one can wholeheartedly express his faith in Buddha, in his Teachings, and in his Order. This is what is called the "Faith in the Three Treasures." Therefore it is through faith that we enter the great ocean of Buddhism.

However, what should be made clear is that, in Buddha's teaching, all is not accomplished by the attainment of this faith. To be sure, it is faith that has enabled one to enter Buddha's path, but one has only made a good start. Much has to be done still. Nay, what one should really do begins at this point. An old Buddhist saying puts it: "Faith, Understanding, Practice, and Attainment." This is taught to be the whole course in Buddhism. First, he must believe in Buddha's teaching, and be converted to Buddhism. Second, he must understand the teachings thoroughly, even if they be as profound as the deepest ocean. Third, he must practise it according to what he understands. Both the "knowing eyes" and the "practising feet" have to be achieved at the same time. When "to know" and "to practise" are satisfactorily fulfilled, he has realized the ultimate, and attained "the sacred fruit."

(1) *Dai-chido-ron* (Mahaprajnaparamita-sutra in Chinese) 1, (The Taisho Edition Vol. 25, p. 63).



He has for the first time realized his ideal and can pass from "this shore" to "that shore." It is thus that the great ocean of Buddhism can be "entered by faith and attained by wisdom."<sup>(1)</sup>

## 2

Buddhism is a religion of wisdom. Buddha, as pointed out already, was one who developed his teachings on his confidence in the reasoning power of man. His teachings are, as a matter of course, based on wisdom from beginning to end, and their ultimate goal is also the realization of release and freedom through wisdom. All delusions being wiped away by wisdom, all the lust of the flesh being overcome by wisdom, and the righteous way being established by wisdom, he has attained the stage where pure wisdom alone shines brightly, where the ideal of release and freedom can be realized. The expression "to attain by wisdom" clearly indicates that wisdom is the greatest power that enables man to achieve enlightenment in Buddhism. Even though the whole process of Buddhism consists of faith, understanding, practice, and attainment, that faith is one based on comprehension, that practice is one led by "knowing eyes," and that attainment is one based on wisdom. Thus the whole process must be permeated with wisdom from beginning to end.

In the way of Buddhism such as this, the role played by faith is not necessarily supreme. A sutra records a conversation between Citta, a wise layman (*upasaka*), and Nigantha, a leader of a non-Buddhist school.

"Layman, do you believe Buddha?"

"Nigantha, I do not believe Buddha."

Hearing this, Nigantha said in praise, looking at his disciples:

"See how frank the layman is!"

Then Citta asked him, saying:

"Nigantha, which do you think is superior, wisdom or faith?"

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(1) *ibid.* I.



"Layman, I think wisdom is superior to faith."

And then Citta, relating how he had at last reached the supreme point after abandoning all lusts and overcoming all evils by means of Buddha's teaching, said:

"Nigantha, how could I, who have thus known and seen, believe other teachers?"

He did not say he believed Buddha, and yet he revealed that he had reached the supreme stage by Buddha's teaching.

Hearing this, Nigantha with a glance at his disciples, abused him, saying:

"See how unfaithful the layman is!"<sup>(1)</sup>

This rather sophistical speech of the layman cleverly indicates how Buddha's way should be. Wisdom is superior, and the role faith plays is just a secondary one, promoting understanding and practice. A sutra of later time says: "faith purifies one's mind."<sup>(2)</sup> Another sutra says: "A purified mind with no suspicion against the Three Treasures (*Trini Ratnani*), we call it faith."<sup>(3)</sup> Here one no longer has absurd thoughts but only wholehearted faith in the Three Treasures. It is then that one can enter the Buddha's way. The phrase "Faith enables one to enter well," cited before, explains most aptly the role played by faith in this teaching. It is explained in another sutra in this way: "If anyone ever tries to enter the sea of the Three Treasures for the first time, he makes faith the basis."<sup>(4)</sup> In entering the way, faith must be established first of all. A purified state of mind has to be created in which, with no regard to anything else, one tries to realize his release by following the way. However, such a faith must be based on the understanding of, and the confidence in the teachings. And beyond there lies a long way to understanding and practice. *Vinaya-Pitaka* (The Rules of the Order) states

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 41, 8, *Nigantha*.

(2) *Kusha-ron* (Abhidharma-kosa-sastra) 4, (The Taisho Edition Vol. 29, p. 19).

(3) *Daijo-gisho* (A Chinese commentary of Buddhist terms in general) 2, (The Taisho Edition Vol. 44, p. 492).

(4) *Bosatsu-hongo-kyo* (The Way of Bodhisattva in Chinese) 2, (The Taisho Edition Vol. 24, p. 1020).

the particulars of the conversion of many a *bhikkhu* as follows:

Having *dharma* of the seen, *dharma* of the won, *dharma* of the understood, *dharma* of the wholly penetrated-into, having lost perplexity and doubt, having won confidence, and not being in dependence on others with respect to the teaching of the teacher, they said to Buddha: "We pray to enter the order and become your disciples under your instruction." Buddha said in reply: "Come, *bhikkhus*! Well declared is *dharma*! Walk according to Brahma-life for right endmaking of suffering."<sup>(1)</sup>

That was their *upasampada* (ordination). The *bhikkhus* then understood what the leading principle of Buddha's teaching was. They saw clearly that this was the very path they should walk. Their faith was established, no doubt or hesitation being left in their mind. They thus entered the Buddha's way. But that was not the end of what they should do. On the contrary, what they really ought to do started at this very moment. "Come, *bhikkhus*!" invited Buddha, "do your discipline of purification to make an end of suffering." Obeying these words, they started their practices. It was in such a sense that an ancient scholar said: "Faith makes one enter Buddhism; faith is the prerequisite to understanding and practice." This is the true position of faith in the primary structure of Buddhism.

### 3

Faith does not end its role even after one has entered the Buddha's way. The way is far and steep with many difficult tasks to be accomplished. The ideal can never be realized without ardent and continuous effort. Buddha has often compared lusts to vines and trees. As soon as they are clipped, new vines bud again and grow thick. As soon as they are cut, the roots of the trees give birth to new trees. As soon as a lust of the flesh is overcome, another lust occupies our mind. An old sutra tells of a *bhikkhu* who, being defeated in his

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga* 6, 32; 6, 37; 9, 4; 10, 4; 14, 5.

battle with this horrible enemy, wept in the dead of night over his incompetency. It is also recorded that a *bhikkhu* called Godhika lost six times the freedom he had attained and stabbed himself to death.<sup>(1)</sup> The *Dhammapada* (The Words of Truth) tells of Buddha's teachings thus:

The channels run everywhere, the creeper stands sprouting; if you see the creeper springing up, cut out its root by means of knowledge.<sup>(2)</sup>

The ultimate freedom must be attained by wisdom. However, in order to accomplish the work of wisdom well, one's mind must be prepared to make ardent and sustained efforts. Wisdom can accomplish the big task of freedom only when one has a determined will and is supported by a steadfast faith.

Buddha once told the *bhikkhus* at the Jeta Grove the following fable:

In ancient times there broke out a war between *Devas* (gods) and *Asuras* (evil gods) who challenged them. Then, Sakka (the ruler of the gods) taught the gods going to battle, saying: "Whenever fear and unrest arise in your hearts at the battleground, look at the top of my Sakka's flag. Looking at it, you will be rid of your fear and feel secure. And whenever you cannot look at the Sakka's flag, look at the flag of Pajapati, or that of Varuna, or that of Isana. You will be no longer fearful." Sakka has thus taught the gods going to war.

*Bhikkhus*, I myself would like to teach you the same thing. Whenever you, entering the woods, sitting under the trees, or living in an empty house, waver, doubt or become terrified, you should remember me. Believe that Gautama is Buddha, who has attained all, who is possessed of both wisdom and deeds, who knows all of the world, and who should be respected by all the world. When you thus remember me, your unrest, fear and trembling will be re-

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 4, 23 *Godhika*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 39, 20 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 289).

(2) *Dhammapada*, p. 82. (S. B. E. Vol. X)

moved. *Bhikkhus*, when you cannot remember me, remember *dharma*. Believe that *dharma* is what was told by Buddha, what is full of blessings at present, and what leads us to the greatest peace. When you thus remember *dharma*, your unrest, fear and trembling will be removed. And if you cannot remember *dharma*, remember *sangha* (order). The *sangha* of Buddha's disciples is the comfort of those who do good, the comfort of the righteous. Believe that *sangha* deserves respect, and that it is 'the best field' on earth. When you thus remember *sangha*, your unrest, fear and trembling will be removed.<sup>(1)</sup>

The way is that of wisdom, that of practising wisdom. Buddha teaches: "This is the way, there is no other that leads to the purifying of intelligence. Go on this path!"<sup>(2)</sup> But it is by no means an easy task to follow the path with utmost diligence. It is also said: "He who does not rouse himself when it is time to rise, who though young and strong, is full of sloth, whose will and thought are weak, that lazy and idle man never finds the way to knowledge."<sup>(3)</sup> Then how can one acquire the power which enables one to follow the path fervently? Buddha points out that one should acquire the power by thinking of the Three Treasures: Buddha, *dharma*, and *sangha*. He teaches us to strengthen our faith by bearing him in our mind. He teaches us to gain power by believing that the *dharma*, taught by Buddha, will lead us without fail to the realization of the supreme ideal. And *sangha* is a holy group of those who, with the same goal and led by Buddha's teachings, endeavor to follow his way. Buddha teaches us to overcome idleness by remembering the *sangha*. As has been quoted already, anyone trying to enter the sea of the Three Treasures makes faith the basis. Faith is, in the final analysis, nothing but conversion to the Three Treasures. One enters Buddha's way for the first time by being converted to the Three Treasures. Faith enables him to enter. Now, how can understanding and attainment be accomplished after em-

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 11, 3, *Dhajagga*.

(2) *Dhammapada*, p. 68. (S. B. E. Vol. X.)

(3) *ibid.* p. 69.

bracing faith? It is evidently accomplished by the way of wisdom. But in order to succeed in that difficult task of achieving understanding and attainment, there must be something which stimulates him to devote himself diligently and intently. And that will be no other than *saddhindriya* (believing faculty), or more concretely, *saddhabala* (the power of faith), which is created by thinking of the Three Treasures. The well-known *Avatamsaka* (Garland) *Sutra* says:

Faith is the root of the way, and the mother of merits, for therein lies the wonderful power which promotes all good, erases all doubts and realizes the highest path.<sup>(1)</sup>

## 4

Why did Citta, the layman, declare that he did not believe Buddha? If one tries to analyze and examine Buddhist faith with sagacity, he will soon find that its basic element consists not in personality but in teaching. Scholars since olden times have said: "Depend on *dharma*, and not on man."<sup>(2)</sup> This was Citta's reason. The "Three Refuges" begin with the words: "I take my refuge in Buddha." This may seem to imply a faith in a person. But it really means: "The Blessed one is *arahant* (worthy one), *sammāsambuddha* (rightly awakened), and *viññāṇasambodhi* (one who does as he speaks); that is why I take refuge in Buddha."<sup>(3)</sup> He is the very man who taught us the teaching, and who, having realized it himself, became the truly enlightened one. He is our greatest teacher, and has set before us the greatest example. Therefore, we devote ourselves to him and depend on him. The conversion in this sense is to believe him because he stands on the right *dharma*, not because of his personality. In other words, because we believe his *dharma*, we believe him. Buddha once

(1) *Kegon-kyo* (*Avatamsaka-sutra* in Chinese) 6 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 9, p. 433).

(2) *Dai-chido-ron* (*Mahaprajnaparamita-sutra* in Chinese) 9 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 25, p. 125).

(3) *Samyutta-nikaya* 11, 3 *Dhajagga*; etc.

said that he was discoverer of an old way.<sup>(1)</sup> He also said:

It has been already decided, decided as a law, and established as a law whether Tathagata (Buddha) be born in this world or not. Tathagata, knowing it, perceiving it, teaching it, revealing it, judging it, explaining it, says "Behold!"<sup>(2)</sup>

Buddha is honorable because his *dharma* is honorable. Buddha should be depended on because his *dharma* can be depended on and because he has attained it and taught it, and has set an example.

The sutra says: "As far as we are concerned Buddha is the center, the leader, and the basis of *dharma*."<sup>(3)</sup> This conveys very well the feelings of Buddha's disciples. If Buddha had not been born in this world to teach the *dharma*, mankind could not have known it. And if Buddha had not appeared before mankind to manifest the *dharma*, how could they have obtained the faith to practise it? Accordingly, the understanding and practice of the disciples could not but depend on Buddha himself. Those who read the Sutras of Agama (Traditional Canon) will be inevitably moved by numerous expressions of belief and trust the disciples had placed in Buddha. A layman believer living in Savatthi, once said that he, seeing off Buddha on his journey out of the Jeta Grove, worried and grieved to see him going far away, but that he waited for his return with hope and pleasure.<sup>(4)</sup> When Buddha was about to start on the far journey of death, disciple Ananda, who had been always at Buddha's side, grieved bitterly, saying: "The world will be dark, with nothing for us to depend on." Such feelings of the followers toward Buddha are very touching. However, the sermon Buddha preached to the grieving disciple showed clearly how the Buddhist faith should be: "Be ye islands unto yourselves. Take

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 12, 65 *Nagara*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (The Smaller Agama in Chinese) 12, 5 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 80).

(2) *ibid.* 12, 20 *Paccaya*; cf. *ibid.* 12, 14 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 84).

(3) *ibid.* 12, 19 *Bal na Pandito*.

(4) *ibid.* 55, 6 *Thapataya*; cf. *ibid.* 30, 32 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 2, p. 218).



the self as your refuge. Take yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the *dharma* as an island."<sup>(1)</sup> The real refuge is the *dharma*, and also oneself that apprehends *dharma*. If we abstract the basic construction of Buddhist faith, we will only find it to be the unshakable self with a firm grip on the *dharma*. The Buddhist faith can never exist unless we ourselves perceive the *dharma*, devote ourselves to it single-mindedly, and possess the zeal to realize it in ourselves.

The position Buddha took regarding this was that of a leader, and nothing more. Once a Brahman, visiting Buddha, asked: "Why is it that some of your disciples, in spite of the existence of *nirvana* and that of the way to it, cannot attain *nirvana*, though you are there as the leader?" Then Buddha asked in return: "You may know the way to Rajagaha. Supposing there was a man, intending to go to Rajagaha. He came to you asking how to get there. You taught him kindly in detail. He might get there safely, or in spite of your direction, he might lose his way. Rajagaha really exists. Also exists the way to it. And you show it. Why is it that, for all that, some reach there and others don't?" To this cross-question the Brahman could only reply that he only showed the way, and had no power to do otherwise. Thereupon Buddha said: "Brahman, my situation is the same. *Nirvana* really exists, and there is a way to it, too. I show it as the leader. Nevertheless, some of my disciples can attain it and others cannot. What could I do with it? Brahman, Buddha only shows the way."<sup>(2)</sup> In this sense the term "leader" describes Buddha's position in Buddhism most aptly. He is a leader to be trusted, setting an example and giving encouragement. But the goal to be attained by fervently following the teachings and examples is the *dharma*. Whether Buddha be in the world or not, *dharma* itself exists eternally. It is because Buddha has

(1) *Digha-nikaya* 16 *Mahaparinibbana-sutta*; cf. *Jo-agon-kyo* (The Larger Agama in Chinese) 2, *Yugyo-kyo* (The Taisho Edition Vol. 1, p. 15).

(2) *Majjhima-nikaya* 107 *Ganakamoggalana-sutta*; cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* (The Medium-length Agama in Chinese) 144 (The Taisho Edition Vol. I, pp. 652-3).

revealed it and set an example that we cannot help following him. It is because his teachings are the most beautiful and accurate description of the *dharma* which he has expounded that we cannot help relying on them. It is because the *sangha* is a beautiful community of those striving to realize the *dharma* by the instruction of Buddha that we cannot help devoting ourselves to it. These are truly the Three Treasures. Herein lies the true state of faith, essential to Buddhism.

Now I must proceed to the way of another faith. It is the faith in the Pure Land Sect (*Jodo* in Japanese) of Buddhism, and also that in Christianity. By comparing this with that, we will learn more clearly the characteristics of Buddhist and Christian faiths.



## Chapter IX. On Faith in Buddhism (contd.)

### 1

In the preceding chapter I dwelt on the type of faith called "faith through understanding" or "faith through wisdom." This faith depends on understanding, and the way of Buddha considers it as "the origin of ways, the mother of merits." The type called "faith through person" or "faith through hearing" totally differs from the "faith through understanding" in its fundamental structure.

A Chinese commentary on a sutra describes first the faith through understanding, and then refers to the faith through person, saying: "This way depends on events or persons, and is called faith, too." The commentary adds that in Sanskrit there were originally two different words for these two kinds of faith, but that in Chinese both were translated by one word, "*shin*," without discrimination.<sup>(1)</sup> These remarks are noteworthy.

The original type of Buddhist faith is, as stated before, not the faith through person but the faith through understanding. I do not mean to say, however, that there is no faith through person in the original Buddhism. For instance, I can now recollect the reminiscences of the Elder Sunita in *The-ragatha* (The Psalm of the Brethren):

I, of obscure birth, was poor and engaged in a humble service, a cleaner of filth.

I was detested and jeered at; I humbled myself and bowed to people.

I happened to see Gautama the Buddha enter the biggest city of Magadha.

As I laid down the load and got near to worship the

(1) *Dainichi-kyo-sho* (A Commentary of Mahavairocanabhisambodhi-sutra) 3 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 39, p. 614).

Buddha, the Highest of human beings came to a halt out of compassion for me.

At the feet of the Blessed one, I entreated the ordination of the Highest of all the living, raising my eyes to His face.

Thereupon, Lord of mercy, the Blessed one who loves all mankind, said to me: 'Come, O *Bhikkhu*!' Thus did I receive confirmation.<sup>(1)</sup>

It seems that the faith that occurred between Buddha and Sunita was not a faith through understanding but rather a faith through person. No teaching was given; there could be seen no process of understanding and conviction. And Buddha's words of permitting ordination, "Come, O *Bhikkhu*!," have something common with those words of Jesus, "Follow me!," calling to Peter and Andrew casting a net into the sea of Galilee. After conversion, however, Sunita became a *bhikkhu* and, in no way different from other disciples, sought after the truth according to Buddha's instructions.

I can cite another instance. It is about an old *bhikkhu* called Pingiya. He became old and was about to lose his sight and hearing when he, for the first time, listened to the teaching of Buddha, and followed him. His reminiscences in *Sutta-nipata* are filled with fervent love and devotion for Buddha himself:

I do not stay away from him even for a moment, from Buddha of great understanding, from Buddha of great wisdom.

Who taught me the *dhamma*, the instantaneous, the immediate, the destruction of desire, freedom from distress, whose likeness is nowhere.

I see him in my mind and with my eye, vigilant night and day; worshipping I spend the night, therefore I think I do not stay away from him.

Belief and joy, mind and thought incline me towards the doctrine of Buddha; whichever way the very wise man goes, the very same I am inclined to.

Therefore, as I am worn out and feeble, my body does not go there, but in my thoughts I always go there, for

(1) *Theragatha* 620-625.

my mind is joined to him.<sup>(1)</sup>

This pathetic recollection of the old *bhikkhu* clearly shows that he started from "faith through person." And there is something in his faith which is similar to a vine coiling around a big tree. "By *dharma*, not by person," declares the sutra definitely: and so should be the original way of Buddhist faith. But if there is a person here who has well materialized the *dharma* within himself, people, especially those who are weak in understanding and practice, will naturally cling to this great personality in faithful devotion—who can deny this? It is natural therefore that something of faith through person should have existed even among the early Buddhists. The "faith through understanding" was made even firmer by adding some degree of "faith through person."

Accordingly, even if there had been a distinction between faith through understanding and that through person, it would not have been necessary to emphasize it. And the actual circumstances might have been that it would have been quite difficult to make the distinction. When Chinese translators chose the one word *shin* for the two types of faith, it probably did not cause a great deal of inconvenience. But as time passed and when the so-called Pure Land Sect in Buddhism began to advocate their faith definitely and strongly through person, the situation could not remain as it had been.

## 2

Now, what is the way of faith through person? We can say that it is the same as the faith commonly understood at the present time. It is not the faith that comes through the understanding and conviction of the *dharma*, but it is the attitude of admiration of, and absolute and persistent dependence on a personality. The sutra I quoted before says, "It is a faith in events and persons." It also says: "It is as though we listened to an aged leader; even if his sayings are out of our understanding, we instantly receive him and depend upon him,

(1) *Sutta-nipata*, p. 201. (S. B. E. Vol. X.)

because he has never deceived us.”<sup>(1)</sup> This comparison is somewhat insufficient to explain the real state of this faith: its passionate strength and profound construction cannot be so easily explained by the simple parable of an aged elder. But it is possible to understand through this comparison that the core of this faith lies in personality and not in understanding.

Why should one cast off the way “by *dharma*” and choose the way “by person”? It is not enough to say, “because he has never deceived us.” Such an answer cannot explain from whence the wonderful passion and the profoundness of this faith gush out. In this respect what the teachers of the Pure Land Sect say reveals the truth more exactly.

Quoting the saying of Zendo, Honen explains:

Zendo annotates that “deep mind” means to believe deeply, which has two phases. One is to believe deeply that we are so *karma*-bound that there will surely be no release for us; the other is to believe profoundly that Amida Buddha saves mankind with his forty-eight vows, that is, we will be born into the Pure Land by only ten repetitions of the formula *Namu Amida Butsu* (Adoration for Amida Buddha). It is called “deep mind,” for we believe this and never doubt it. This annotation shows that we should know ourselves first, and then believe in Buddha’s vow. The latter belief can be established only on the basis of the former one.<sup>(2)</sup>

Buddha taught that we should not seek the ultimate refuge anywhere except in our own self. This is a very proper attitude for those who follow the teachings of Buddha and pursue the way to *nirvana*. And, in so far as they wish to remain consistent in this attitude, it is improper and impossible for them to seek and lean upon a personality, that is to say, to follow the way of faith through person. Neither Buddha’s vow nor God’s salvation has anything to do with them. However, can man always stand firm in such a position?

Honen says:

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(1) *Dainichi-kyo-sho* 3 (The Taisho Edition Vol. 39, p. 614).

(2) *Jodo-shu-ryaku-sho* (The Resume of the Jodo Sect).

Train yourself as the instruction directs you, and you all will get the final resolution. Cultivate yourself as the teaching tells you, and you all will obtain Buddhahood.<sup>(1)</sup>

But facing the sublime instructions and reflecting upon his own inability, he found himself lamenting:

Nothing is wrong with me but lack of piety and full of illness.<sup>(2)</sup>

Day and night, I busy myself with futility. Day after day, I concern myself about avarice.<sup>(3)</sup>

Oh wretched man that I am! No instruction is in my reach!<sup>(4)</sup>

However noble the doctrine, he was too weak to fight against the clamorous demands of passion within him, and he came to the realization that he was quite powerless. Thus reflecting on himself, he came to stand on a totally different position from the starting point of the way to release and *nirvana* which Buddha established for mankind.

### 3

When one has truly reached the realization that he is a "sinful and *karma*-bound one," to use a well-known phrase, or, in Shinran's famous words, that he is "one doomed to hell without merits," he is ready for the "faith through person." A venerable priest of the Meiji era explained it thus: "Trying to pour out tea, we cannot pour into a cup turned upside down. We must turn a cup upward to pour out tea. However often we listen to the preaching, the water of *dharma* cannot be poured into a cup turned upside down. Turn upward your cup of mind. It is prejudice and arrogance that make the cup of mind upside down. When we turn our cup of mind upward, we could have faith in the teaching, being conscious of our uselessness."<sup>(5)</sup> It is easy to turn a tea-cup upward, but it is not easy to turn the cup of mind upward.

(1) *Tozanjo* (An Essay of Honen.) (2) *Yogi-mondo* (A Dialogue of Honen).

(3) *Juni-kajo-mondo* (The Twelve Dialogues of Honen).

(4) *The Life of Honen*, 14.

(5) The Sayings of Shichiri Kojun.

It is easy to notice the foolishness of others, but not easy to notice our own; it is easy to talk of other's sinfulness, but not easy to realize our own. Self-partiality is a human weakness. In order to turn the cup of mind upward, in spite of this weakness, we must have rigorous dictates of our conscience and a strict self-examination.

"Use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping?"<sup>(1)</sup> says Hamlet in the play of Shakespeare. When we look into ourselves mercilessly, we cannot be too ashamed of ourselves. It is then that we can appreciate the lamentation of Honen, who was said to have had no equal in wisdom in his days: "We should be ashamed; we should lament! Our eyes of wisdom are lost, and our feet of practice have withered."<sup>(2)</sup> We can feel how dreadful this lamentation is. We can be indignant at ourselves for proudly wandering about with what little knowledge we have. Although it is sometimes misunderstood, it is a realization like that of Paul's, that created nature was "condemned to frustration."<sup>(3)</sup> By then we find ourselves on our way to faith, filled with something strangely powerful and profound. Already our pride in reason has been cast off; our confidence in practice has been smashed. There only remain our tears to be shed over our miserable plight. But the helping hand of absolute mercy is extended to those who stand here in tears dejectedly. There is no longer any room for our judgement on whether to believe or not to believe, whether to be deceived or not to be deceived. Shinran's well-known words pertinently express the real state of this faith:

Even if I should be persuaded by Honen to adore Amida Buddha and to go to hell, I should never regret it. Because, if only I could choose another way, I might weigh whether to believe or not, but here I can do nothing but cling to this merciful salvation, now that I am a sinful, karma-bound being doomed to hell.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.

(2) *Jodo-shu-ryaku-sho* (The Resume of the Jodo Sect).

(3) cf. Romans 8, 20.

(4) *Tanni-sho* (The Sayings of Shinran) 2.

A man standing on this faith really cannot help clinging to the merciful hand even if he be deceived or cajoled.

Supposing that I were able to become a Buddha by another way, even though I go to hell reciting the *nem-but* (adoration for Amida Buddha), it is natural that I would regret having been persuaded. But hell is my destiny, as I am incapable of practising any austerity.<sup>(1)</sup>

This passage from *Tannisho* (The Sayings of Shinran) deserves to be appreciated deeply.

#### 4.

Such faith is often called "faith through hearing," because the essential structure of this faith is that hearing is immediately transformed into believing.

*Tannisho* says further:

Travelling over a dozen countries at the risk of your lives, you have come only to hear the way to be born into the Pure Land. But, if you expect from me something of the way or some words of scriptures to hear besides the adoration of Amida Buddha, you are not quite right. To hear such things, you may go to and ask the scholars in Nara or Hiei. As for me, I heard and believe in Honen, clinging to the helping hand of Amida Buddha with no other reason.<sup>(2)</sup>

He implied here that to hear was to believe. To appreciate this, we have to return again, through self-examination, to the realization of the helplessness of the common mortal.

In forming faith through understanding, reasoning plays an all-important role. One hears, reasons, understands, and then believes. An old Buddhist term expresses it as, "hear and follow afterwards." In order to connect "hear" with "follow," it is indispensable to have between them understanding through reasoning. Reason must be satisfied; wisdom must be put into action. Because of it this faith is called the "faith through understanding" or the "faith through wis-

(1) *Tanni-sho*. 2.

(2) *ibid.* 2.



dom." But now, the position is changed to that of one who has realized the helplessness of a common mortal, where there is no reason to be satisfied and no wisdom to be put in action. One's pride in his reason has been smashed mercilessly; one's confidence in his wisdom is gone. We can only find a dejected self lamenting over his foolishness. There no longer exists the process of reasoning and understanding which plays an important role in the faith through reason. Now, hearing has to become believing at once.

Let us trace this process in Shinran. Reflecting on himself, he realized his inability to carry on any ascetic practices, and that his going to hell was his due. Here all his self-efforts, his pride in reasoning power, his confidence in his practices had been given up. In him there no longer existed reasoning nor understanding. In such a situation, absolute dependence was the only thread that linked Shinran, the hearer, to Honen, the teacher. Through this thread of dependence, what Honen preached and what Shinran heard became Shinran's faith at once. To hear was to believe; there was no other way. It is then that we can really appreciate the following words of Shinran: "There is nothing else in me than to believe what I have heard from Honen."<sup>(1)</sup>

## 5

There is another noteworthy characteristic in this faith through person. That is, the faith is not chosen by one, but rather it is given to one by others. It is not that one believes, but that one is moved or allowed to believe. Hence this faith is also called "faith by other's power" (*tariki* in Japanese). On the other hand, the faith through understanding is called "faith by self-power" (*jiriki* in Japanese). Shinran once said: "How could I dare to make believe as if the faith given by Buddha were mine?"<sup>(2)</sup> Then, what do you mean by the faith given by Amida Buddha? Shinran tells us that it is given to

(1) *Tanni-sho* 2.(2) *ibid.* 6.



one "by the guidance of Amida Buddha."<sup>(1)</sup> This strange way of the Pure Land Sect was advocated by Honen and taught exhaustively by Shinran. The feeling of absolute reliance on Amida Buddha gushes out naturally from the bottom of one's heart when one sits before Amida Buddha face to face. " 'Natural' means spontaneous and has nothing to do with human discretion,"<sup>(2)</sup> says Shinran. Indeed, it is from Shinran that one has heard the teaching, but faith has sprung within him naturally. He cannot help thinking that he has attained this faith "by the guidance of Amida Buddha."

Why is it necessary for this faith to pass through such a process? It is because one realizes his sinfulness, his helplessness, and his inability to carry on any ascetic practices, and so he abandons all his self-efforts and only bows dejected. There is no longer any discretion of his own. If there were any, that must come from outside. Hence it is natural to conclude that the faith has been given him by Amida Buddha. We will now be able to understand the following words in *Saiyo-sho* (The Sayings of Kakunyo<sup>(3)</sup>):

Faith is a true mind; not human delusion but Buddha's mind, which is called faith when given to us.

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(1) *Tanni-sho* 6. (2) *ibid.* (3) The Third Leader of Jodo Shin Sect.

## Chapter X. On Faith in Christianity

### 1

Among Plato's dialogues there is one entitled *Euthyphron*, in which the author discusses what piety or faith is. One morning Socrates is at the gate of King Archon, where Euthyphron, a well-known Athenian prophet, happens to pass by. Socrates stops him and begins a dialogue with him as usual. As the dialogue goes on, Euthyphron's crude superficial view of religion comes to expose itself. Socrates asks: "Then do you think sacrifice is an offering to God and prayer is an asking of God?" And finally Euthyphron has to admit that piety or faith is a means of dealings with the gods.<sup>(1)</sup>

This is a very ironical conclusion. Moreover, what is extremely regrettable is that of all the religions that have ever existed very few belong outside this category. All simple religions among primitive people, and crude popular beliefs invariably take such a form of reciprocity of benefits. Old religious literature tells us that mankind confronted gods very often in such form.

O Prajapati! Thou solely holdst all the living. Give us all that we ask of you through deifying you. Make us owners of wealth.<sup>(2)</sup>

O Mitra-Varuna! Praise has been sent by a celebrated *rishi* (sage) observing ritual. O God with excellent mental power! Grant us the prayer that we may share equally in an abundant and fruitful autumn harvest, according to thy will.<sup>(3)</sup>

We very often find such expressions in the Psalms of the Veda, which formed a remote historical background of Buddhism. They can be summed up in a simple form of reciprocity,

(1) *Euthyphron*, 14 C.

(2) *Rig-veda* 10, 12, 10 *Prajapatya-sukta*.

(3) *ibid.* 7, 61, 2 *Mitra-Varuna*.

"*Dehi me, dadami te* (Give to me, and I give to thee)."(1)

The same can be seen in the old faith of Israel, which formed the historical background of Jesus' religion.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying,

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee."(2)

The Lord called him (Moses) out of the mountain, saying—"Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples."(3)

An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.(4)

Here is also a form of reciprocal favor. People offered God praises for Him and their observance of His Law; and they expected from God His blessing and their prosperity. The core of the Old Testament rests on this covenant of reciprocal favor through Moses, the servant of Jehovah.

However, such a form of reciprocity cannot be applied to Buddha's religion, which is a pure religion of wisdom. Likewise, Jesus' religion stands outside this category, being a pure religion of faith. Then how did Jesus' religion transcend such a form? By tracing its process, we will be able to see clearly the essence of the Christian faith.

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(1) cf. E. Carpenter: *Comparative Religion*, 1913, pp. 142-3.

(2) Genesis 28, 20-22.

(3) Exodus, 19, 3-5.

(4) *ibid.* 20, 24.

## 2

Adolf von Harnack has stressed in his work *Das Wesen des Christentums* that what is new in Christ is not that he preached what had never been told before, but that what he preached was far purer than what others preached. "It is true that what Jesus said was also found in the sayings of prophets in Judea or even of Pharisees, but I am sorry to say that they have many other things besides it. You should ask not what is new in his teachings but rather if the teachings preached here was actually pure and powerful."<sup>(1)</sup> Harnack goes on to compare this idea to a spring newly dug up. It was long ago that the holy, clear spring was dug up, but the water has become dirty with accumulated mud and dust. Now the spring has been reopened and clear water has once again gushed out through the pile of dust and mud that suffocated the spring before. This was the new thing in Jesus' religion. There was power as well as purity. This idea is suggestive when we examine the essence of Jesus' religion.

The people brought up in the faith of the Old Testament wanted to share in God's blessing by fulfilling the covenant with God. When Moses called the elders of the people together to convey the words of Jehovah, they all answered, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do."<sup>(2)</sup> They meant Torah, the Law of God, when they said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken." They invoked God's blessing by promising to observe the Law. These were the people of the Old Testament. But could they really fulfil the Law of God? The Book of Psalms says:

The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands He recompensed  
me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not  
wickedly departed from my God. For all His ordinances  
were before me, and His statutes I did not put away from

(1) Adolf von Harnack: *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 1901, s. 31.

(2) cf. Exodus 24, 1-8.

me. I was blameless before Him, and I kept myself from guilt.<sup>(1)</sup>

When everything went well, one might feel, "I am blameless before Him," and think he could fulfill all the laws. But once everything began to go wrong, their confidence would become shaky with doubts. Another verse says:

But who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.<sup>(2)</sup>

And yet throughout their history we have seldom seen the children of Israel very prosperous. The Old Testament had proposed to make them prosperous above all other people. The historical fact, however, is that it was always other people who had seen good days, and that God's elect had been doomed to bend the knee to endure hardship. And the Psalm often tells of their despair and lamentation. Then they gradually began to reflect upon themselves. They came to realize little by little how difficult it was to be upright before the Lord. God is said to "see in secret," while man cannot see even his own faults. On reflecting, who can keep himself from shuddering? Thus we often find earlier, in the Old Testament, as strong words as the well-known ones of Paul's in Romans: "There is none righteous, no, not one." "There is none that does good, no, not one."<sup>(3)</sup>

Such reflection, however, did not as yet become the main current that moved the people. The prophets blamed them for their unrighteousness, and urged them to follow after the Law, and to await the day of fulfilment of God's covenant. The scribes, as specialists for annotating the laws, made the annotations more and more complicated. The Pharisees, proud of their sincere observance of the Law, occupied a unique

(1) Psalms 18, 20-23.

(2) *ibid.* 19, 12-14.

(3) *cf.* Psalms 14, 1-3; Romans 3, 11-12.

position among the people. And yet the lot of these people remained unimproved. People were tired of waiting for the day of prosperity. It was then that the gospel was brought among them by John the Baptist and then by Jesus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>(1)</sup>

## 3

The Sermon on the Mount contains some important passages which show what Jesus' attitude toward the Law was.

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. . . . For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>(2)</sup>

This passage shows us two points. One is that he did not want to destroy the Law, but, on the contrary, he wished to fulfill it. He could not possibly win the heart of the people, in the face of the then dominant historical background, by insisting upon the abolition of the Law. That he called upon the people to fulfill the Law was but natural. But, if that was all he did, he would not have been much different from other prophets.

Then what made his views on the Law different from the prophets? In short, he thought that the Law could not be accomplished only by its strict application, but that people must probe deeply into the spirit of the Law. One cannot read the Sermon on the Mount without being deeply impressed with this point.

The Law says, "You shall not kill." But probing into its spirit we should see that "every one who is angry with his brother," and "whoever insults his brother," and "whoever

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(1) cf. Matthew 3, 2; 4, 17.

(2) Matthew 5, 17-20.

says, "You fool!", are all violating the Law.<sup>(1)</sup> Again the Law says, "You shall not commit adultery." But it would imply that "whosoever looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery with her already in his heart." Therefore Jesus thought it was difficult to fulfill the Law unless his resolve was firm enough to say, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away."<sup>(2)</sup>

Again the Law says, "You shall love your neighbour." But Jesus teaches them that the spirit of the Law should be that one should have deep and comprehensive love so great as to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," because to fulfill the Law in order to be given the blessing of God is to become the children of the Father who is in heaven; and because God "makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Hence if you love only those who love you, what right have you to be the children of the Father in heaven? For everybody does it. If you salute only your brother with love, you will never be better than others.<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore he cannot help telling them that if they wanted God's blessing they must be perfect as their Father which is in heaven is perfect.

It was a wonderful teaching. If we can probe deeply into the Law to such an extent and can put it in practice, we can say without hesitation even before God that the Law has been fulfilled. There is all the difference in the world when this is compared to the way of the scribes and the Pharisees who were only particular about the superficial application of the Law. It is for this reason that Jesus said: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."<sup>(4)</sup>

On the other hand, such an interpretation of the Law was surely terrifying. Those who were led by Moses said that they would rather "sit by the fleshpots" and "eat bread to the full" than follow Jehovah.<sup>(5)</sup> Here we see a natural inclination

(1) cf. Matthew 5, 21-26.

(3) cf. Matthew 5, 43-48.

(5) Exodus 16, 3.

(2) cf. Matthew 5, 27-30.

(4) Matthew 5, 20.



of men as children of earth. Because of this weakness, in spite of all the reproaches and encouragements of many leaders and prophets, people could not observe the Law even very superficially, until the day of Jesus. The Old Testament is nothing but the endless repetition of such violation and censure. With this human weakness, who can put into practice such a deep and comprehensive spirit of the Law as Jesus taught people? And if they cannot share in God's blessing unless they fulfill the Law, there will be nothing for them to do but despair. But of course Jesus did not throw people into despair.

## 4

We have made a detour, but we can clearly grasp the true nature of Jesus' faith after we have thus examined its historical background.

Jesus preached that by the sole means of faith it was possible to accomplish what had seemed impossible, the fulfilment of the Law. He taught that nothing could make this possible except the strange power that lay behind this strange thing faith. Those who read the Gospel will no doubt be impressed with the great many expressions Jesus used in preaching his faith. One morning on their way back to Bethlehem, Jesus and others were hungry. He saw a fig tree but found nothing on it except leaves. And so he said to it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." And presently the fig tree withered away. When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How soon is the fig tree withered away!" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and never doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."<sup>(1)</sup> He also said: "For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to

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(1) Matthew 21, 21-22.



you."<sup>(1)</sup> Another time he preached to them the following, which is well-known: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every-one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Now how was this possible? "What man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?"<sup>(2)</sup> Jesus thus explained the reason why everyone could receive without fail all that he asked if he believed in the heavenly Father. This implies that the source of this strange power of faith is found not in man, but in God.

Jesus understood God as heavenly Father to man, omniscient and omnipotent. His idea took shape in beautiful and powerful parables of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. He taught that there was nothing to worry about and that if they sought first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, all things would be given to them. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?"<sup>(3)</sup> Thus he even told them not to think about eating and drinking, a matter of utmost concern for men on earth, and only serve the Father in heaven. "And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O

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(1) Matthew. 17, 20.

(2) *ibid* 7, 9-11.

(3) *ibid*. 6 25-27.

men of little faith?"<sup>(1)</sup> This is a beautiful parable, but the path indicated here is a path that can be entered through the strait gate, a path that must be chosen with determination. Indeed it is easy to depend on God, but it is not easy to believe only in God and depend only on God, casting away all other worries. However, once anyone has accomplished this, a spring of strange power flows out of the heavenly Father, and washes his whole being.

Jesus illustrated in various parables how to make such a resolute choice. Once he called a little child to him, and set it in the midst of the disciples, saying: "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."<sup>(2)</sup> As we grow old, we tend to become a slave to various worries. We think of livelihood, family, wealth, knowledge, and numerous other things. But Jesus teaches that one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven if one does not yearn for the heavenly Father as earnestly as a little child, casting away all worries. To be as a little child means the prerequisite of making a resolute choice. Jesus goes on to teach: "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come; but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire."<sup>(3)</sup>

Jesus expressed the same idea thus: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."<sup>(4)</sup> Again he said: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on

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(1) Matthew 6, 28-30.

(2) *ibid.* 18, 3-4.

(3) *ibid.* 18, 7-9.

(4) *ibid.* 6, 24.

finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."<sup>(1)</sup> All these tell us to choose this one thing that is of paramount importance, at the risk of all that we have. This thought has come down in the form of Pascal's idea of "gambling," and more recently in Kierkegaard's idea of "choice."

## 5

We have already noticed that people in the Old Testament chose the way of carrying out the Law by their own effort in order to share in God's blessing. This way was, in Buddhist terms, colored deeply by "self-power." In Socrates' terms, it was not yet free from the form of "dealing with God." The fulfillment of the Law by this means was never accomplished after all, and they had to continue to walk under the dark, sad fate, without meeting the blessed sunlight.

At this juncture Jesus came to preach a new way that greatly amplified the spirit of the Law. It was a way in which one fulfilled the Law not by his own effort, but by the strange power of faith that had sprung out as he entrusted everything to the omnipotent God. In Paul's terminology, it was the way to be justified by faith<sup>(2)</sup> and not by the Law.<sup>(3)</sup>

There is not a trace of self-power nor any form of bargaining here, but only a powerful way of pure faith. I have described its outline and the true state of Jesus' faith. The fundamental structure of this faith was made more clear and definite by Paul. As it is most important to grasp the structure of this faith as well as possible in order to understand this religion, I intend to talk about Paul's faith and compare it with Buddhist faith, especially with the faith in the Pure Land Sect.

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(1) Matthew 13, 44-46.

(2)cf. Romans 3, 22; 3, 24; 4, 5.

(3) cf. *ibid.* 2, 18; 3, 20.

## Chapter XI. On Faith in Christianity (contd.)

### 1

Among the various questions that arise on the history of Christianity, there is one concerning the actual founder of the religion—"Was it Jesus or Paul who founded this religion?" Commonly, it is without question that Jesus established this religion, but as we inquire into the history of the Christian Church or that of its doctrine, the figure of Paul inevitably looms large. And we come to raise such questions as: "Can we really say that Christianity was founded by Jesus? Isn't Paul the actual founder of the religion?" Such questions were the subject of animated discussions by several German scholars at the beginning of this century.<sup>(1)</sup> The controversy came naturally to the conclusion that Jesus was the founder of the religion, and Paul was a great figure who understood Jesus well and continued his work. This conclusion will never be overthrown. And it is enough that we realize the greatness of Paul and the importance of his achievements which brought about such a controversy.

In the different denominations of Buddhism we sometimes find similar problems. For instance, in the Shin Sect, whose founder is generally believed to be Shinran, when we consider it as an order, the achievement of Rennyo is so great that we sometimes feel that he should be regarded as the actual founder of this order. Similarly, in the Sodo Sect of Zen Buddhism, the founder is Master Dogen, but the figure of Master Keizan is great enough as to deserve designation as the founder. We cannot deny the existence of such a problem when we know that Dogen is called *Koso* (High

(1) cf. Wrede: *Paulus*, 1905. Julicher: *Paulus und Jesus*, 1907. Meyer: *Wer hat das Christentum begründet, Jesus oder Paulus*, 1907.

Founder), and Keizan *Taiso* (Great Founder). However, it should be known that the part of Paul in the Christian Church is far more significant than that of Rennyo in the Shin Sect, or of Keizan in the Sodo Sect. The works of Rennyo and Keizan mostly served to set up the foundation of their respective orders, while those of Paul were far more comprehensive and momentous. Then what were the works done by Paul?

One of his most important works was, as is well known, to bring this new religion into the Greco-Roman world from the sphere of Judaism. This was of great significance even from its external view. None could dare to do it but a man of unequalled discretion, confidence, and ability. Jesus' disciples were all under the Jewish bondage. Even Jesus himself was, obviously, not free from it.

Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>(1)</sup>

These words of Jesus still rang in his followers' ears. They would recall the figure of Jesus preaching before them. We can not overemphasize the significance of the part played by Paul, who went among the Gentiles and brought this new religion to all mankind. But for these achievements, it seems to us that the great history of Christianity might have been entirely different from what it is now. This is one of the reasons why scholars are sometimes obliged to think of giving the honor of the real founder of Christianity to Paul. Yet there are other important points in his contributions.

## 2

We can not deny that Jesus' religion had an essence of a universal religion in spite of possessing the husk of Jewish control. Anyone who can carefully tell the husk from the fruit in Jesus' sermons and deeds, will never miss the seeds

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(1) Mathew 10, 5-6

Jesus sowed. There, in his sermons only the absolute faith in the Fatherly God, the infinite value of man's inner revolution, and the command of love were preached and realized in his deeds. As Harnack put it, it was, after all, filled with God and the Spirit, having no room for other elements to intrude, and consequently it was "connected with the deepest basis of human nature, and nothing else."<sup>(1)</sup> This fact shows that Jesus' religion is for all mankind, and not for only one people. It is because what is concerned only with the deepest nature of man is concerned with all mankind.

As I have often alluded to, however, the "gospel of the kingdom of God" which Jesus had brought among people was preached neither as a theoretical instruction nor as a systematic outlook on the world. In this respect, what Jesus preached contrasts most remarkably with what Buddha did. What Buddha preached through reason had the power to shake man's will and his whole existence. Jesus was received by people in quite a different way from Buddha. His soul spoke directly to their souls, his enthusiasm at once excited their enthusiasm, and his deeds were followed by their imitation. Here I cannot but think of what Buddha, preaching the ideal of words, said to his disciples: "Reasonableness and expressiveness are essential."<sup>(2)</sup> "Reasonableness" means to be theoretically reasonable, and "expressiveness" means to be correct and beautiful in expression. Buddha thought that it is only when a word is reasonable, correct and beautiful in expression, that it is a good word. This is also what people generally consider "a good word" to be. However, "the words of eternal life"<sup>(3)</sup> of Jesus were quite different. Expressed in a way peculiar to Jesus, they went beyond the general theory. They entered the mind of people and shook their whole existence.

But in order that Jesus' gospel be spread among all people and not only among those who could stand before him, it was

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(1) A. Harnack: *Das Wesen des Christentums*, s. 79.

(2) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*, 2, 1.

(3) John 6, 68.

necessary for the *words* to be intelligible to all people. Harnack describes it as "to give the gospel language," and this work was accomplished also by Paul.

"Paul put the gospel in a plain form of spirit and flesh, inner life and outer life, death and life. Born a Jew and a learned Pharisee, he gave the gospel language, so that the gospel, united with the whole spiritual capital working in the history, came to be comprehended not only by the Greeks, but by all mankind."<sup>(1)</sup>

This means, in brief, that the gospel preached by Jesus was given theory and interpretation for the first time. And it is not accident that this work was first done by Paul because, as has been stated before, he was the first to bring the gospel to the Gentiles beyond the Judaic restriction. In order to propagate the gospel among the Gentiles and all mankind at large, it was necessary for him, first of all, to put it into a theory. This having done, he could spread the gospel well among people, and this shows that it is not an accident that "to give the gospel language" was accomplished by this "apostle to the Gentiles" for the first time.

### 3

Thus, when one wishes to understand Jesus' gospel by following the theoretical way, one can find the best guide in Paul. Of course we can say that it is possible, even today to a certain extent, to stand before Jesus and have direct contact with his words and deeds through the Gospel—particularly the three gospels called synoptic gospels. However, as Renan says,<sup>(2)</sup> just as the cooled earth no longer permits us to understand the phenomena of primitive creation, because the fire which penetrated it is extinct, so deliberate explanations have always appeared somewhat insufficient when applying our timid methods of induction to the revolutions

(1) A. Harnack: *Das Wesen des Christentums*, s. 111.

(2) cf. Renan: *Vie de Jésus*, Chap. IV.



of the creative epochs which have decided the fate of humanity. The world we are now living in is a world that has cooled down completely. Only rationality and actual proofs govern the human brain, and the scheme and calculation of enjoying life are man's chief concern. It has become very difficult for us to urge our imagination from the present time to that time—the time when people were kindled with passion to think of the future fate of mankind. In this sense, when one finds it difficult to grasp the true meaning of the gospel through Jesus' words and deeds, it seems possible for him to find a good guide in Paul; because the gospel, united with objective spirit which is at work in the wide range of history, has been already given language and interpretations for all mankind to understand.

As we trace the history of the formation of the New Testament, we can find that the authority given to the Epistles of Paul has been as great as that given to the Gospels since the early days, or rather we may find that the Epistles have received higher value than the Gospels. Any reader of biographies of great Christian thinkers will be able to find how they could touch the profound genius of the gospel through Paul's Epistles. For instance, it is written that what served Augustine, who was exhausted with the bitter struggle between soul and flesh, a chance to come to the faith was the following passage from the Epistle to the Romans:

The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.<sup>(1)</sup>

And it is also well-known that it was through this Epistle that Luther attained new understanding of the gospel. With great zeal he came to the Epistle to the Romans and tried to

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(1) Romans, 13, 12-14.



understand it, when he came across the following passage: "In it the righteousness of God is revealed."<sup>(1)</sup> He hated the phrase, "the righteousness of God." However, a new light started to shine out of this bitter struggle. And this gave him rebirth, with the whole Bible proving totally different from before. These are the circumstances of his new discovery told by himself.

Then why were Paul's Epistles valued so highly? It is because, as I have already stated, his faith in the gospel, which he attained through his experience, was told through his contemplation. In the primitive Christian Church there were some others who were filled with faith in the gospel. But when they spoke, as the Acts says, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit caused them utterance. It was, so to speak, "the utterance caused by others,"<sup>(2)</sup> with their contemplation playing no role at all. Paul was the first to tell of his inner faith through his own contemplation. It was his Epistles that served to support the Gospel with experiences of profound faith, and put it as an idea before human beings. In this sense, the dogma of the Christian Church started from this point, and here also the corner-stone of its creed was laid, and the development of Christian doctrine was given a definite direction.

And this is the reason why I have to consider the way of Christianity once more in Paul though I have already dwelt on Jesus' way turned from the law to faith.

4

Scholars have argued whether Paul's contemplation was theocentric or anthropocentric. Whatever the conclusion may be, no one can deny that Paul reflected seriously on himself and his human nature.

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(1) Romans, I, 17.

(2) cf. Acts, 2, 4.

I have already quoted his words of painful reflection such as: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."<sup>(1)</sup> Then why was he such a man? Reflecting thus, he naturally found two minds in himself, the mind of the spirit and the mind of the flesh.<sup>(2)</sup> "If I don't do the good I would and do the evil I would not, it is no more I that do it. I cannot but say it is not I that do it, but sin dwelling in me. Thus did I find that, when I would do good, evil was present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."<sup>(3)</sup> It reminds us of Goethe's poem deploring, "Two souls, alas, are housed within my breast,"<sup>(4)</sup> and also of Augustine's sad confession, "Though the endless life in heaven pleases me, pleasure in earthly happiness brings me back to this world."<sup>(5)</sup> And Paul, concluding these reflections, said, "So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."<sup>(6)</sup>

With this self-reflection, Paul first started criticizing the way of the law, and naturally he reached the following conclusion that no one could be justified by the way of the law: "None is righteous, no, not one," and "No one does good, not even one."<sup>(7)</sup> Why is it so? It is not because the law is wrong. The law is holy, and God's commandment shown in it is just, and good. But so long as man yields to the mind of the flesh which captures him, he must necessarily disobey God. "It does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot."<sup>(8)</sup> Accordingly, his final conclusion of the criticism of the law was that "No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law,"<sup>(9)</sup> and that, on the contrary, man's sin is made far clearer than ever by the law.

(1) Romans, 7, 19.

(2) cf. *ibid.* 8, 5-8.(3) cf. *ibid.* 7, 20-25.(4) Goethe: *Faust*, I, 1112.(5) Augustinus: *Confessiones*, VIII, 10.

(6) Romans, 7, 25.

(7) *ibid.* 3, 10, 12.(8) *ibid.* 8, 7.(9) *ibid.* 3, 20.

Then, why is man such a miserable being? Paul answers it with the myth of Adam's fall in the Old Testament:

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned.<sup>(1)</sup>

Sin and death are most disagreeable in the world of mortals. Nothing shows human impurity and limitedness better than sin and death. Why do they exist in the world of man? If man was created by God, why is it that He doomed man to sin and die? No thinker has ever been able to give it a rational explanation. And these detestable things inevitably exist among all human beings. Paul dared to solve it thus: "As Adam transgressed against the words of God, sin entered into the world and also did death as atonement for sins." This is merely a mythical explanation. Behind it, however, stands with irresistible force the bitter and pitiful conviction reached through self-reflection: "I am foolish. I am doomed to sin. I am mortal, foolish, impure, and limited." The reflection should naturally result in the realization of "the creature subjected to futility."<sup>(2)</sup>

One who follows Paul's thought will inevitably come to this realization of Paul. And it is when he has actually understood human vanity that he can for the first time "hang on sacredness."<sup>(3)</sup> Here lies the wonderful logic of the way of faith brought forth by Jesus and given language by Paul.

5

Here I cannot but recall the structure of "deep mind" in the Buddhist faith of the Pure Land Sect. Quoting Zendo's annotation, Honen says as follows: Deep mind is the mind which has a deep belief. There are two kinds of belief: one is to believe deeply that he is sinful, mortal, and fated to hell, and the other is to believe in the Amida Buddha's vow and

(1) Romans, 5, 12.

(2) *ibid.* 8, 20.

(3) Augustinus: *Confessiones*, VII, 18.

never doubt that he could be born into the Pure Land by the power of Buddha's vow.<sup>(1)</sup> And he made it clear that in the organization of this faith, the former is needed to establish the latter, that is, "belief in Buddha's vow" can be accomplished only through "belief in one's own weakness." In other words, the fundamental structure is that one must first become conscious of one's sinfulness and mortality, and then depend on the absolute love of Amida Buddha. In the way of faith, brought about by Jesus and put into theory by Paul, there must first be the bitter realization of "the creature subjected to futility," and then comes one's dependence on the absolute love of God. It is very interesting that the fundamental structure of Christian faith is quite similar to that of "deep mind" in the Buddhist faith of the Pure Land Sect.

Thus, Paul's contemplation starts from realization of "the creature subjected to futility," and this idea is immediately linked with "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."<sup>(2)</sup> By the deeds of the law none could be righteous before God. It is but natural that such a man of foolishness, impurity, and limitedness can do nothing with his own wisdom or moral. Accordingly there is no way for man to be righteous and receive God's glory by the deeds of the law or by his own power. Paul emphasizes this in every possible way. But Paul's words are now filled with joy: "The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law."<sup>(3)</sup> It is explained as "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."<sup>(4)</sup> Since everyone is burdened with sin, no one is able to be worthy of God's glory by merits. Now a new way is opened before us. It is a way justified by God's grace or through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, or in other words, a way justified by faith, though we may never be worthy of God's glory.

From this point starts Paul's Christology. This is not found

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(1) cf. p. 83.

(2) Romans, 3, 24.

(3) *ibid.* 3, 21.

(4) *ibid.* 3, 22.

in what Jesus preached, for it was first preached by Paul. Jesus only said, "Follow me!" with no comment on what he himself was. Jesus shed his blood on the cross at the will of his Fatherly God, and he never explained what it meant. But Paul was now going to explain it, or rather, his situation forced him to do so. As he was under God's love through Jesus, and shared in God's salvation through Jesus, he had to reveal what Jesus was and what his deeds meant.

Then, how did he interpret Jesus' character and deeds?

Whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins."<sup>(1)</sup>

In other words, God made up for our sin by "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,"<sup>(2)</sup> and gave his Son death without sin, which expressed God's love of human beings. This is something new which has never been preached by Jesus. A new expression of faith in the gospel has made a start with the understanding of Jesus and following his work.

Quoting Wellhausen's words, Harnack explains this as follows:

By Paul the gospel of God's kingdom is replaced with the gospel of Christ Jesus. The gospel is no longer the prophecy of God's kingdom but the realization of this prophecy achieved by Christ Jesus. In accordance with it, salvation from something in the future is, for him, what has been achieved and what now exists. He made faith stronger than hope.<sup>(3)</sup>

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is near at hand." And Paul thought that this gospel has already been fulfilled by the atonement of Christ Jesus. In consequence the gospel of God's kingdom has turned into the gospel of realized salvation of Christ Jesus. This means that the gospel is no longer under-

(1) Romans. 3, 25.

(2) *ibid.* 8, 3.

(3) A. Harnack: *Das Wesen des Christentums*, s. 111-2.

stood as that of future salvation but the salvation already realized. In other words, the gospel of God's kingdom became the gospel of Christ Jesus, and future hope gave way to present realization.

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>(1)</sup>

The work of the salvation of mankind has already been achieved. It has been achieved by the sacred efforts of Jesus. And "man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved."<sup>(2)</sup> The only thing for people to do is to have faith. Thus the foundation of Christian faith of later days is firmly laid by Paul.

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(1) Romans, 10, 9.

(2) *ibid.* 10, 10.

## Chapter XII. On Faith in Christianity and in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism

### 1

Much has been already said about faith, but since the core of the problem lies here, we must study faith to the fullest measure.

In the preceding chapters, we have studied roughly the basic structure of faith in both Buddhism and Christianity, and have found an interesting fact that faith in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism, and faith in Christianity are, at least in their fundamental structure, very similar to each other. Of course, the historical, social, and spiritual backgrounds of the two are quite different, and therefore, the forms of their expression are not necessarily similar. But if we abstract their essence by taking off the accessory elements, there will appear clearly before our eyes an undeniable similarity of the two. To this fact we cannot be indifferent. Whether we like it or not, we must, with deep interest, focus our attention to this fact.

When we gaze at these two faiths with such interest in mind, the first thing which we should take up and study is the fact that the two are based on man's pitiful consciousness that he is sinful.

In the Pure Land Sect, this consciousness is often expressed as "to be sinful," "karma-bound (kindled with worldly desires)," and "doomed to hell." Essentially, Buddhism tries to be free from human suffering through wisdom and practice. In the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism, this basic structure is entirely abandoned, and the direction of thought is greatly turned. "In these days," Honen deplored, "we are men whose wisdom is blind, and whose practice is lame."<sup>(1)</sup> He also said,

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(1) Hōnen: *Jodo-shu-ryaku-sho* (the Resume of the Jodo Sect)



"The teachings are out of my faculty."<sup>(1)</sup> This lamentation clearly explains the inevitability of abandoning wisdom and practice, which is endorsed by the theory of "the worst generations." It was believed that the worst generations, full of conflicts and out of virtues, had already come. When he turned his eyes quietly upon himself, he would see a man "who seeks for fame day and night and pursues profit day after day."<sup>(2)</sup> And he would find himself in the degenerate age. Thus he could not help becoming conscious of his being sinful, karma-bound, and doomed to hell. Here lies the starting point to the way of salvation by faith, which is quite different from the way of wisdom and practice preached by Buddha.

Mention must also be made as to the change in the conception of suffering (*dukkha*). Buddha's way of enlightenment was to realize the release from suffering. What was the nature of this suffering? We can say that it was, after all, the agony arising from transiency. Old sutras often explain the three sufferings. They are: the suffering of pain from cold, heat, hunger, thirst and so on; the suffering from decay, that is, from the destruction of pleasure; and the suffering from transiency, that is, from the transient nature of things in life. It was certainly the suffering from transiency that Buddha tackled with, and from which he finally found a way to free himself. It includes the sufferings of birth, decay, disease, and death, the sufferings of separation, the sufferings of association with the unpleasant, and the sufferings of being unable to obtain what one wants.

But the crux of what the teachers of the Pure Land Sect preach is not so much the suffering from transiency, as the agony of sin. Of course, the suffering from transiency, which is the fundamental problem of Buddhism, has not been abandoned, since this sect has also developed upon the long historic tradition of Buddhism. As the expression "a sinful and

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(1) *ibid.*

(2) Hōnen: *Jūni-kajō-mondō* (Twelve Dialogues).

transient man”<sup>(1)</sup> indicates, it is preached that what is overpowering the miserable man in the worst generations is transiency as well as sin. The main emphasis, however, is put upon the sinful man. The consciousness of one’s sinfulness and inability to do anything good has now come to the fore, and the problem of the suffering from transiency has been left behind. The agony of sin, which did not present itself among the important problems of the primitive Buddhism, has now been taken up with the greatest concern. This fact must be particularly noted when we compare this faith with the faith in Christianity.

## 2

We see that in Christianity also, death as well as sin is a problem. “Who will deliver me from this body of death?”<sup>(2)</sup>—these words spoken by Paul express the concern of all men who are after all mortal. It is, however, clear that the main emphasis is not put on the problem of death, but on the problem of sin. This is clearly expressed by Paul in a passage quoted before as follows:

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned.<sup>(3)</sup>

Paul also explains the same meaning in a simple way: “The wages of sin is death.”<sup>(4)</sup>

Here, too, the centre of concern is not the suffering from transiency, but the agony of sin. A thorough self-examination is done, with the discovery of man who wishes to do good and fails to do so. We find men “who are carnal, sold under sin,” and men who with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Such profound and severe self-examinations and introspections perhaps can never be found in the religious records of the world.

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(1) *Jodo-shu-ryaku-sho* (the Resume of the Jodo Sect).

(2) Romans 7, 24

(3) *ibid.* 5, 12.

(4) *ibid.* 6, 23.

Where there are such self-examinations and introspections, the hope of doing good deeds by self-effort must necessarily be abandoned. Of course, there is no expression of "self-effort" in Christianity. Instead it employs the words "laws" and "merits" to express the same idea. The self-examination naturally denied the possibility of salvation through man's merits:

But that Israel who pursued the righteousness which is based on law did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why?(1)

It is because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the work of the law. Because they, who were unable to do good, attempted to do merits and to fulfil the law. "All fall short of the glory of God."<sup>(2)</sup> Why? For all have sinned, and there is none who deserves the glory of God. And there is nothing else he can do than to prostrate himself and praise his Father who is in heaven, saying, "One there is who is good."<sup>(3)</sup>

Here Paul's words "the creature subjected to futility" carries great weight with them. "Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all."<sup>(4)</sup> "Where is boasting then?" We must answer, "It is excluded."<sup>(5)</sup> It is most foolish to think that we are wise; and it is most arrogant to say that we can do good. The prophets of the Old Testament said, "Ye are everything; I am nothing," which is indeed true. Only when man realizes that he is "the creature subjected to futility" who has nothing good to boast of, he can stand at the starting point of the way to this faith.

It should not be forgotten that at the back of such realization is the myth of Adam's sin. There is also the belief of the last days and the last judgement, which makes this realization all the more keen. Thus the Christian view of history which begins with Adam's sin and ends with the last judgement, has undoubtedly a downward course. It exactly corresponds to the theory of "the worst generations" that lies at the back of the faith in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism.

(1) Romans. 9, 31, 32.

(2) *ibid.* 3, 23.

(3) Matthew 19, 17.

(4) Romans 3, 9.

(5) *ibid.* 3, 27.

## 3

Now it must also be pointed out that these two faiths, which begin with such consciousness, are undeniably similar in advocating that the evil and the foolish are their *shoki* or "guests of honor."

The word *shoki* is a Buddhistic term, which means those who are rightly qualified to receive the teachings. As is well known, the Pure Land Sect in Buddhism emphasizes that the evil are the *shoki*. We must recall the bold words of Shinran which are the most representative expression of this thought.

Even the good can be born into the Pure Land. Why not the evil?<sup>(1)</sup>

This expression is clearly contrary to common sense and baffles us. He who meets these words for the first time would certainly doubt his eyes and ears. From here springs the marvelous fascination of the words. But if we think more carefully, we will understand that these words are the natural and very logical conclusion of those who want to be delivered through *nembutsu* or "adoration of Amida Buddha." It is known through their writings that both Honen and Shinran were often asked by people if the sinful could receive the merciful salvation of Amida Buddha. The question was unmistakably the doubt of those who were bound by the logic of common sense, which takes for granted that merits and happiness, evils and punishment should be connected respectively. But here it is preached that it is happiness and merciful salvation and not punishment that is connected with evil. It is but natural that people of common sense can not understand such contradiction. But if we enter the world of faith from the world of common sense, we will easily understand that these words spoken by Shinran are truly logical.

We cannot have this faith unless we realize that we are sinful. From our point of view, "he who is conscious of his sinfulness and mortality would pray to be born into the Pure

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(1) *Tanni-sho* (the Sayings of Shinran) 4.

Land through adoration of Amida Buddha, giving up his self-effort."<sup>(1)</sup> From the viewpoint of Buddha, "Amida Buddha vows to welcome the sinful whom the other Buddhas have forsaken."<sup>(2)</sup> Therefore the sinful must be the best guest. It is also explained that only he, who can realize "he is sinful and kindled with worldly desires," can "believe the Vows of Buddha." Then, what is the true intention of the Vows? Who has the right to be the *shoki*?

The true intention of the Vows is to let the sinful be born into the Pure Land.<sup>(3)</sup>

Thus affirmed Honen. Shinran went further to declare boldly:

Even the good can be born into the Pure Land. Why not the evil?<sup>(4)</sup>

This is the natural conclusion of the logic of this faith.

#### 4

The same idea is clearly expressed by Jesus as follows:

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.<sup>(5)</sup>

When Jesus and his disciples were sitting at meat in the house of Matthew with many publicans and sinners, one of the Pharisees who saw it said to the disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard this, he said:

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.<sup>(5)</sup>

Here too, it must be noted that the logic used is that the sinful deserve the mercy of God.

In this connection, the parable of "the lost sheep" will be

(1) Honen: *Dialogues*.

(2) Honen: *Nembutsu-ojo-yogi-sho* (the Essence of the Way of Nembutsu).

(3) *The Life of Honen*, 27.

(4) *Tanni-sho* (the Sayings of Shinran) 3.

(5) Matthew 9, 12-13.

recalled.—When the disciples said to Jesus, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” he called a little child and set him in the midst of them, saying, “Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” He further added, “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost,” and preached the following parable:

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.<sup>(1)</sup>

By this we know that the Father who is in heaven first takes care of those who are lost or foolish or sinful.

Furthermore, the parable of the “Prodigal Son” explains the idea very clearly. The story runs like this—A certain man had two sons. The elder son was good but the younger son was not. The younger of them, after having received the portion of goods that fell to him from the father, went into a far country, and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. Reduced to poverty, he afterwards repented, and returned to his father. The father warmly welcomed the younger son, and ordered his servants to kill a fatted calf for the feast, saying, “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” The elder brother saw it and said angrily to his father,

Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!

Then the father said, “It was fitting to make merry and be

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(1) Matthew 18, 12—14.

glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."<sup>(1)</sup>

The father of the two sons said it was natural that they "should be" glad. But the logic of common sense would not necessarily recognize the matter as natural. The foundation of morality in this world would be lost unless the good are rewarded and the evil are punished. Then it is the elder brother's attitude that is natural; while the father's answer is natural only in the world beyond common sense. The father's logic is, at the same time, the logic of Jesus and of the Father who is in heaven, and moreover, of the merciful Vows of Amida Buddha.

Jesus once said, "Even so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."<sup>(2)</sup> He also said, "The tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."<sup>(3)</sup> Or again, he said suggestively, "So the last will be first, and the first last."<sup>(4)</sup> Herein lies the logic of the faith of Jesus who said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."<sup>(5)</sup> The structure of this logic corresponds to the structure of the logic of the faith of Honen, who said to the harlots of the port town, Muro: "Amida Buddha made the Great Vows in order to save sinners. Believe the Vows and do not depreciate yourselves."<sup>(6)</sup> And Shinran expressed the natural conclusion of this logic by declaring, "Even the good can be born into the Pure Land. Why not the evil?" For here exists a world beyond the common sense in which the last naturally go first and the first last.

## 5

Thus it can be said that these two faiths are based on the denial of the law of causality. As is well known, Buddhism

(1) Luke 15, 11—32.

(2) *ibid.* 15, 7. (3) Matthew 21, 31. (4) *ibid.* 20, 16.

(5) *ibid.* 15, 24. (6) the Sayings of Hōnen.



was originally the teachings founded upon the principle of "cause and effect." The *Dhammapada* says:

By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers;  
By oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified.  
The pure and the impure stand and fall by themselves,  
No one can purify another.<sup>(1)</sup>

Since one sows the seed and reaps the harvest, one can rely only on oneself. Then the only aim is to enlighten and control one's self; to do other things is like counting upon others' cows.<sup>(2)</sup> Another verse says:

Self is the Lord of self,  
Who else could be the Lord?  
With self well subdued,  
A man finds a lord such as few can find.<sup>(3)</sup>

But he who believes in this faith is a man who realizes he is sinful, karma-bound, and unable to do any good. He has not the slightest idea of controlling himself. He is a sinner who knows nothing about virtue. And according to the principle of cause and effect, he is naturally doomed to hell.

Upon such thorough realization is founded this faith that advocates the adoration of Amida Buddha. Here the self-effort is completely cast away, and the way of salvation by faith is wide open. It is taught not only to "count upon others' cows," but also to go on board a large ship of others' mercy. A stone naturally sinks under the water, but even a big stone can float when it is placed in a large ship.<sup>(4)</sup> The principle of cause and effect is abandoned. The law of causality is passed over. And the way of *eko* (meaning to turn one's own merits to save others) is newly established. It means that a sinful man can be born into the Pure Land through the merits of Amida Buddha. Thus the principle of cause and effect is abandoned.

In Christianity such conversion is represented by the idea of atonement. As mentioned before, Judaism, which was the

(1) *Dhammapada* 165. (2) *ibid.* 19. (3) *ibid.* 160.

(4) cf. Hōnen: *Yōgi-mondō* (Dialogues on Principle).

mother of Christianity, was a religion of the law. The center of concern was to fulfil the law and to be justified by the law. The idea of justification by the law is legalistic. The law means the commandments of God, and justification is a legal word which means the verdict of "not guilty." This is the world of self-effort which is based upon the principle of cause and effect. But in the religion of faith which was brought about by Jesus and given expression by Paul, it is preached that "Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."<sup>(1)</sup> The principle of causality was abandoned, and instead the way of "justification by faith"<sup>(2)</sup> was established through the atonement of Jesus. The way was newly opened upon the realization that no man could be good or righteous, since all have sinned. The way for a sinful man to receive the grace of God through belief in the atonement of Jesus Christ was opened. Paul said:

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned.<sup>(3)</sup>

But we have now received the atonement of all sinners through the great righteous deed of one man (Jesus—the second Adam), and the way which leads to life is opened.<sup>(4)</sup>

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.<sup>(5)</sup>

Thus this logic, which is beyond the principle of cause and effect, exactly corresponds to the logic of salvation by Amida Buddha.

Then, why is such a logic possible? To this question the two saints of Buddhism answered with such words as "the wonder of the Vows,"<sup>(6)</sup> "the unfathomable wisdom of the

(1) Romans 3, 23—24.

(2) *ibid.* 4, 5; 4, 24.

(3) *ibid.* 5, 12.

(4) *ibid.* 5, 18.

(5) *ibid.* 5, 19.

(6) *Tanni-shō* 1.

Buddha"<sup>(1)</sup> and "reason without reason."<sup>(2)</sup> Jesus answered this question with parables, and Paul with mythical explanations. If our logic remains within the world of cause and effect, this new way of faith must go beyond our logic. But the way of dependence and salvation cannot be accomplished unless it goes beyond the world of causality. That is the reason why both in the West and in the East those who began to preach the new way of faith resolutely passed over the principle of cause and effect.

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(1) *Mattō-shō* (the Letters of Shinran).

(2) *ibid.*

### Chapter XIII. On Faith in Christianity and Faith in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism (contd.)

#### 1

In the previous chapter we have pointed out the three points of similarity between the faith in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism and the faith in Christianity; namely that both faiths are based upon the realization that man is sinful, that in both faiths the foolish and evil are the *shoki* or "guests of honor," and that salvation is accomplished outside the law of causality. Then where does the power, which denies the law of cause and effect and realizes the great work of salvation, come from? Such power, of course, cannot be found in human beings themselves. We cannot but think that it comes from a world which exists far beyond, nay, infinitely beyond our human world. In short, the power is found in Amida in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism, and in God whom Jesus called "Father which art in heaven" in Christianity. Thus we have now come to the stage where we must compare Amida Buddha and God.

I have recently noticed with great interest that some progressive scholars are using expressions such as "God whom we call Amida" and "Amida God." For example, one says that God whom we call "Amida" is the god whose "guest of honor" is the sinful man. Another states that God has been for the first time realized as absolute love by Shinran. Such expressions have never been employed before in the long history of Buddhism. And these bold expressions would never be approved by those who live in the long tradition of Buddhism. For Amida is a Buddha, and not a God.

Amida Buddha, who is the object of adoration, is explained in the *Sukhavati-vyuha Sutra* as follows:

He was a king who, moved by a sermon of a Buddha, left his throne, and became a wanderer dedicated to achieve

Buddhahood. At some stage in his career he made a series of famous Vows, the eighteenth of which reads: "If, after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters, who desire in sincerity and faith to be born into my country, should not be born thereto by only adoring me ten times, may I not attain the highest Enlightenment!" This is the essence of the Vows. His Vows have already been accomplished and he has become a Buddha, and now lives in the Pure Land in the west. This very Buddha is Amida.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus Amida is neither the Creator of the world, nor the Holy One, nor can he be said to be *das Ganz Andere* to man. For he, as a king, listens to and practises the teachings of a Buddha and has become a Buddha himself; he is one of those who since the earliest days has developed man's highest possibility and reached Buddhahood through enlightenment, and therefore, he exists within the Buddhistic concept of "Buddha" and not within the Christian concept of "God."

It is said that God has existed since eternal past, long before the world came into existence; and that the God created everything, and still reigns over man as Father in heaven. Such an existence can never be found in the Buddhistic world, which is the world of cause and effect. Neither its beginning nor its end can be known. There exists only the law of cause and effect. And Amida is one of those who have purified themselves in such a world and have developed the highest possibility of man through the observance of the law (*dharma*). Consequently Amida is by no means a Christian "God," but a Buddhistic "Buddha."

## 2

So long as we have the Buddhistic view of the world, it is neither permissible nor suitable to call Amida "God." Yet

(1) cf. *Muryōju-kyō* (Sukhavatī-vyuha Sūtra in Chinese) I (the Taishō Edition Vol. 12, pp. 265).

it is necessary, at the same time, to pay attention to the fact that some attempt to call this Buddha "God," and to fully understand the significance of the attempt.

Buddha is not God. God is not Buddha. These two highest beings are totally different from each other in their reason of existence, in their ways of being, and in their backgrounds. Naturally the ways of salvation are also different. Nevertheless, the attitude of adorers towards Amida and the attitude of Christians toward God are fundamentally very similar to each other. Though Buddha is not God, and God is not Buddha, the attitudes of man toward the two have an undeniable similarity.

The more man comes to know himself, the more he comes to know God. When we realize that we do not do the good that we want, and we do the evil which we do not want, we can feel clearly the existence of God above ourselves. Man is weak, little, and foolish. Man has only limited existence, being sinful and mortal. Only when we observe ourselves in this way, and shed tears upon ourselves, the figure of God, which is full of great love, begins to shine over our head. Therefore the deeper his self-reflection becomes, the more he comes to know God, and the more he knows God, the more he knows the limitless distance between man and God.

In this connection I recall Pascal who said:

Let them at least learn what is the religion they attack, before attacking it. If this religion boasted of having a clear view of God, and of possessing it open and unveiled, it would be attacking it to say that we see nothing in the world which shows it with this clearness. But since, on the contrary, it says that men are in darkness and estranged from God, that He has hidden Himself from their knowledge, that this is in fact the name which He gives Himself in the Scriptures, *Deus absconditus*.<sup>(1)</sup>

From the view-point of common sense, this sounds very illogical. But it is the strange logic of this faith that the more

(1) Pascal: *Pensées*, 194.

man knows, the more he comes to know that he knows nothing; and since he does not understand, he says he believes. Pascal says that the believers of this faith will not say *scio* (I know), but will say *credo* (I believe).

Similarly, those who have faith in "adoration of Amida Buddha" consider that the wisdom of Buddha is unknowable.<sup>(1)</sup> As mentioned before, the man who made the vows became Amida Buddha through Buddhistic practices. He attained Buddhahood through the enlightenment of his sublime faculty. So Amida is not God, but Buddha. The state of Buddhahood is originally neither absolute nor strange to man. Buddha and man stand on the same ground; no matter how difficult the Buddhistic practices may be, and no matter how far the distance between Buddha and man may be, man has the possibility to become a Buddha. There is no insurmountable barrier between Buddha and man. Such is the way of thinking in basal Buddhism concerning the relationship between Buddha and man. Buddha is neither the Absolute Being nor the Whole Other. If man could only purify himself by taking off the dirt that covers himself, the wisdom of Buddha would be intelligible to him. But in the Pure Land Sect, the relation between Buddha and man is entirely different from the above.

"These days," said Honen, "we are men whose wisdom is blind and whose practice is lame. We can no longer count upon the sacred way."<sup>(2)</sup> This is an announcement of the abandonment of self-effort, a confession as a result of his self-examination which commands him to abandon his self-effort. By nature, man can do good and also do wrong. Augustine says that man is originally "*posse non peccare*" (able not to sin). He can go to heaven; he can also go to hell. Thus man lies between heaven and earth. But when he observes himself well, he will find that he is a man "who seeks after fame day and night, and pursues profit day after day." Why is he such a wretched man? It is because the worst generations, full of

(1) *Mattō-shō* (the Letters of Shinran).

(2) Hōnen: *Ojō-taiyō-shō* (the Outline of the Way to Salvation).



conflicts and out of virtue, has come. Under these circumstances, however excellent the sacred way might be, man would have to give up all hope.

Here is man's realization which made Augustine say that man is *non posse non peccare* (unable not to sin). Here is also man's realization that he is "sinful and karma-bound," which made Shinran say, "I am destined to hell." Being such a man of mortal sin, it is impossible for him to attain Buddhahood through self-effort. There already exists an insurmountable barrier between Buddha and man. Buddha has now become an Absolute Being and the Whole Other to man. Therefore, man can no longer perceive the wisdom of Buddha, and he has to accept the Vows of salvation as "unknowable."

## 3

Shinran has often used the expression "unfathomable reason." If man could know and understand the reason of faith by his intellect, there would be a faith knowable to man. The way to the Pure Land, however, is not such a faith as to be understood by man's reason. Where man could know and attain his aims through his self-effort, there would be no salvation from without. Why is this so? A passage from the *Mattosho* (the Letters of Shinran) explains as follows:

*Tariki* (power from without) has an unfathomable reason, for there is none able to reason out the Buddha's Vows, and to get at the Buddha's wisdom. Therefore, the Saint (Honen) says that there is an unfathomable reason in the Vows of Buddha.<sup>(1)</sup>

Everybody who is interested in this faith may want to know the reason why he can be born into the Pure Land by the adoration of Amida Buddha. But according to Shinran, a sinful man can never know the reason; for it is a reasoning between a Buddha and a Buddha, and none of us is able to

(1) *Mattō-shō* (the Letters of Shinran) 7th. letter.

know the wisdom of Buddha. So Shinran said that it would be most proper for us to accept it as "the unknowable wisdom of Buddha" and "the unfathomable Vows of Buddha."<sup>(1)</sup>

And we must not overlook the fact that Shinran is trying to say that he is not reasoning it out himself but that he has learned it from somebody else. Readers will recall the passage quoted before from the *Mattosho*, which says, "The Saint says that there is an unfathomable reason in the Vows of Buddha."<sup>(2)</sup> Needless to say, the Saint here is Honen. Shinran, whenever he explained the Vows, added clearly or suggestively that what he said had been taught by Honen. For example, in the above-mentioned letter, he wrote: "The Saint says that *tariki* has an unfathomable reason, since it is the Vows of Buddha."<sup>(3)</sup> In the *Tannisho* it is written that "The Saint says that faith in adoration of Amida Buddha is unfathomable, since it is unknowable to man." We should not fail to see the significance of this careful explanation. If the attitude of those who believe in self-effort based upon man's intellect could be expressed in the words, "Wherever we are to go, let us be led by our reason,"<sup>(4)</sup> then the attitude of those who depend entirely upon the providence of the Absolute Being, giving up their own intellect, would be like this: "Wherever we are to go, let us resign our own intellect and be led by the merits of the Vows." This attitude has been well expressed by Shinran in the famous passage of the *Tannisho*, which reads:

Even if I should be cajoled by Honen to adore Amida Buddha and go to hell, I should never regret it.<sup>(5)</sup>

If this faith demands us such an attitude of mind, we shall have to give up our reasoning altogether. Then we will realize that the words, "*Tariki* has an unfathomable reason"

(1) cf. *ibid.* 7th letter.

(2) *ibid.* 2nd letter.

(3) *Tanni-shō* 10.

(4) Platon: *Nomos* II, 667 A.

(5) *Tanni-shō* 2.

have been used with a positive significance. In this connection, I recall a passage of the letter which Shinran wrote to one of his followers, Joshimbo:

Your exposition may be right. But that is your reasoning, and it will be more proper for you to do no reasoning and to accept the Wisdom of Buddha as unknowable and unfathomable.<sup>(1)</sup>

Perhaps Joshimbo asked Shinran's opinion about his interpretation of the cause of the Pure Land after he had managed to reach his own conclusion. Shinran praised his interpretation, but said that any interpretation should not be made. For the essence of this faith is to abandon one's reasoning mind and to awake to one's foolishness and mortality. It is only by giving up all one's reasoning that one can attain the faith of absolute *tariki*. At the end of the letter Shinran added: "*Tariki* is to have no reasoning of your own."<sup>(2)</sup> It is not too much to say that such a way of thinking is no doubt the attitude of "Absolute dependence."

## 4

It may be said that the attitude of Christians toward God is best expressed in the words of Schleiermacher who says that the feeling of absolute dependence (*Schlechthiniges Abhängigkeitsgefühl*)<sup>(3)</sup> is the essence of religion.

What did Jesus intend to teach when he said, "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them"?<sup>(4)</sup> What did he intend to teach to his disciples when he said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these?"<sup>(5)</sup> The answer is plain. Jesus said:

(1) *Mattō-shō*. 10th letter.

(2) *ibid.* 10th letter.

(3) cf. Schleiermacher: *Der Christlicher Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kircher*.

(4) Matthew 6, 26.

(5) *ibid.* 6, 28-29.

Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?—Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" . . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.<sup>(1)</sup>

These words clearly indicate that Jesus taught his disciples that the faith of absolute dependence upon the heavenly Father is essential for Christians.

Or again, what did Jesus want to teach to his disciples when he called a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"?<sup>(2)</sup> The answer is clear: the kingdom of God should be the kingdom of those who have the mind of such children. They simply rely upon those who love them, with no calculation, no doubt, and no hesitation of their own. Thus it is clear that what Jesus tried to teach was such pure and whole-hearted faith in the heavenly Father.

When Jesus knew that his end was near, he was exceedingly sorrowful. The writers of the Gospels do not try to conceal it, nor is it necessary for them to do so. For it is of no shame whatsoever for Jesus not to have Socrates' tranquillity or Buddha's calmness: the way of Jesus was quite different from that of attaining such tranquillity and calmness of mind. And probably this was fully understood by the writers of the Gospels, who, with no hesitation, described the sorrowful Jesus as having said at Gethsemane: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death."<sup>(3)</sup> They had no hesitation whatsoever in describing the sad plight of Jesus who fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."<sup>(4)</sup> But Jesus finally could overcome his sorrow. We must care-

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(1) *ibid.* 6, 27-32.

(2) *ibid.* 18, 3.

(3) *ibid.* 26, 38.

(4) *ibid.* 26, 39.

fully follow the course of Jesus' overcoming the sorrowful mind. He was exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. He could not but pray to let his cup, if it be possible, pass from him. He, however, added these words, praying, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."<sup>(1)</sup> He prayed thus three times. Then his human sorrow gradually disappeared and mingled harmoniously with his prayer and his faith in his heavenly Father. And he went away, as God commanded, and stood before those who kill their bodies, but not their souls.

Here is the greatest example of absolute dependence. Thus the works of Jesus were accomplished, thereby establishing firmly the divinity of "the Son of God." Under the influence originating from there, many people, as God commanded, followed Jesus bearing a cross. Furthermore, millions of people prostrate themselves before God and his only Son, believing the words of Paul—"Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."<sup>(2)</sup>—Here is the essence of Christianity, a religion built upon faith in absolute dependence.

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(1) *ibid.* 26, 39; 42.

(2) Romans 3, 23-24.

## Chapter XIV. On Faith in Christianity and Faith in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism (contd.)

### 1

When Jesus entered a certain village, a woman named Martha received him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard his words, without attempting to help her sister. Martha, somewhat displeased, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." And Jesus answered and said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."<sup>(1)</sup> Now, what is the one thing which is needful?

We also recall the parable of "the pearl of great price." Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."<sup>(2)</sup> He meant to say that as a pearl-merchant would lay out all his money to buy one pearl of great price, the followers of Jesus had to seek the kingdom of heaven through absolute dependence on God, casting aside all things. In other words, this parable teaches us that the only thing which is needful for the followers of Jesus is faith. When we observe ourselves carefully, we find that we wish to do good, and we always fail to do so. How can we sinners receive the grace of God? How can we sinners be better than others?" We can only rely upon "thy" divinity, thoroughly realizing the words of the Old Testament, "Ye are everything; we are nothing." This is the reason why the Christians say that "faith only" is necessary.

Furthermore, the followers of Jesus would realize that even this faith is, in the final analysis, given them by God. That they are able to have this faith is because they have realized that

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(1) Luke 10, 38-42.

(2) Matthew 13, 45-46.

they are incapable of doing any good. Only such a realization could make them believers of the way preached by Jesus. But they cannot take even this realization as their own merit. When there were envying, strife and divisions among the Corinthians, Paul wrote and said to them:

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.<sup>(1)</sup>

It was most foolish to dispute, saying, "I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos." For man cannot attain faith through his wisdom, nor can it be given by others. Only God can give it to man. Paul also said, "Your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."<sup>(2)</sup> Thus Christianity is based upon the strange logic of absolute dependence on God.

## 2

It is natural that there should be similar logic and expression in the faith of the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism. In this connection we recall Shinran who said he had no disciples.

It is most foolish for the believers of Amida to say "I am of this master," or "I am of that priest." I have not even one disciple.<sup>(3)</sup>

These words are very similar to those written by Paul in an epistle to the Corinthians. Shinran's purpose of saying this was also similar to Paul. "For," said Shinran, "if I could make others adore Amida Buddha through my own direction, they might be called my disciples. It is most improper to call those my disciples who adore Amida Buddha through his indication.—Should we claim the faith which is given by Buddha? Nay, of

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(1) I Corinthians 3, 5-7.

(2) I Corinthians 2, 5.

(3) *Tanni-shō* 6.



course, not."<sup>(1)</sup> It is we that believe in Amida Buddha. However, how have we been able to enter such a world of faith? It is strange, for we are sinful and kindled with worldly desires; we cannot do any good but wrong. How can such sinners enter the life of faith through their own effort? The only conceivable reason is that something great must have made it possible for us to have faith. We cannot help thinking in this way. And the power which exercises strange influence upon man must be the unfathomable power of Buddha's Vows. And, as a natural conclusion of such a way of thinking, we cannot but be convinced that faith is given by Buddha, and that through the indication of Amida Buddha we have come to embrace faith.

Now if we thus believe in the way of salvation from without (*tariki*), the only thing on which we should rely must be faith in Amida Buddha. What should we care for? Only faith. What should we do? Only adoration of Amida Buddha. All other things must be thrown away. Religious meditation (*dhyaana*) may be significant, but it should be thrown away as impossible with us. It is good to do religious practices, but they should be given up as impossible with us. Shinran expressed this idea very clearly and definitely when he said, "I have never adored Amida Buddha for the sake of my parents."<sup>(2)</sup> If he could do any good by himself, he would convert his adoration of Amida Buddha to his parents, but since he knew well he could not do so, he never made such an arrogant attempt. Here is another most plain and concrete expression of "faith only."

### 3

As mentioned before, such faith is called "faith by hearing," because hearing plays a very important role in it. The earnest believers of this faith must be, as I have said

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(1) *ibid.* 6.

(2) *ibid.* 5.

before, those who have given up their own efforts. A Greek philosopher once said boastfully, "I will speak of the whole."<sup>(1)</sup> But the believers of this faith have to admit that they know "How many kingdoms know us not!"<sup>(2)</sup> They should keenly feel that "the wisdom of this world is folly with God."<sup>(3)</sup> Naturally they have nothing to do with the kingdom of God. It should be considered very arrogant if we say that we believe it because we can understand it. It is not by understanding, but by hearing that we can have faith. Now "hearing" and "believing" are inseparable. Thus the words of Paul, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ"<sup>(4)</sup> strongly appeal to us with their full significance. Hearing is believing. There exists nothing else between the two.

Perhaps the strongest expression of this may be found in the famous words of Shinran in the *Tannishō*. He said, as quoted before, that he did not know at all whether they could be born into the Pure Land or fell into hell by adoration of Amida Buddha; that he did nothing but to believe in the words of Honen who had advised him to adore Amida Buddha to find merciful salvation; that, if they expected him something of the reason or some words of scriptures to hear besides the adoration of Amida Buddha, they were not quite right; and that, to hear such things, they should have visited the scholars in Nara and Hiei.<sup>(5)</sup>

Shinran stood firmly on the realization that he was "destined to hell,"<sup>(6)</sup> giving up his self-effort. Wisdom and knowledge were abandoned long before. So it was only natural that he should have told the people to go to the scholars in Nara and Hiei if they were to know the faith in adoration of Amida

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(1) the saying of Democritus

(2) Pascal: *Pensées*, 207.

(3) I Corinthians 3, 19.

(4) Romans 10, 17.

(5) *Tanni-shō* 2.

(6) *ibid.* 2.

Buddha by wisdom. And there existed in him only the feeling of absolute dependence that connected the teacher, Honen, with the hearer, Shinran.—“Even if I should be deceived by Honen and should fall into hell, I would not regret at all.”<sup>(1)</sup> Thus what Honen said and what Shinran heard directly constituted the unshakable faith. Here too, “hearing” was “believing,” and nothing else existed between the two.

## 4

It must be known that in this form of faith salvation is considered to have been already accomplished.

Jesus preached and said, “Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” These words clearly indicate that “the kingdom exists yonder, and is to come thither.” The kingdom of heaven was at hand, and was yet to come in the future. Paul, however, was placed in different circumstances. The difference between the two was based upon what theologians call recently “basal historic event.” The event took place at Golgotha, where sacred blood was shed. Mankind was newly placed in a totally different position by the crucifixion of the Son of God who, without sin, died for the atonement of all sinners. Thus the word “atonement,” which the writers of the Gospels had never been able to use, began to appear everywhere in the letters written by Paul. He wrote:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.<sup>(2)</sup> When we read these words carefully, we find that they describe not the things of the future but things accomplished. “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” These

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(1) *ibid.* 2.

(2) Romans 5, 1-2.

words mean that we are already released from the unrest of sin and fear, and we are now in a position to enjoy peace with God. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,"—this passage expresses most strongly the peace and delight of the believers who stand in "this grace." And the salvation in this faith or what Paul called "justification by faith" was thought to have been already accomplished through the atonement. The grace of God is not to come, but has already come. Faith automatically puts believers in the grace, and their cups are already full of grace.

Of course, the present life of the believers is full of sin. The kingdom of God does not yet exist on earth, and they have to lead an earthly life imploring the grace of God. But salvation will surely be given to them. There is a reason to assure them of its coming. For the great works of atonement have already been accomplished, and it is recognized that they deserve the grace of God by faith, namely they are "justified by faith."

Christians express such a position of believers with the word "hope." This word implies in common sense some possibility, as is seen in the expression that since there is some possibility there is some hope. The hope used by Christians, however, is entirely different from such a hope. The hope here is not a matter of possibility, but is decided definitely as possible. Paul explained this and said, "Hope does not disappoint us."<sup>(1)</sup> If the hope could not be realized, they should be ashamed of themselves, and would be miserable. However, so long as they stand in the grace of God, such a thing would never happen. Therefore, where there is such a hope, there is always a delight. "Rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God"<sup>(2)</sup> means nothing else but this. Their daily life on earth might be full of sufferings and grievances, but so long as such a hope supports them, they can wait with patience, and can endure with delight. Thus, such a hope comes to exist in the mind of man

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(1) Romans 5, 5.

(2) *ibid.* 5, 2.

through faith, and helps to support it. Consequently it is called "the anchor of faith."

## 5

The same logic of faith is expressed by Shinran, who wrote in the *Mattoshō* as follows:

A man of true faith is decided to the Pure Land by the unfailing grace of Amida Buddha. Therefore he need not await the end of his life; when his faith is firmly established, it will be decided that he should be born into the Pure Land.<sup>(1)</sup>

Then why is this possible? The only reason mentioned here is the unfailing grace of Amida Buddha, but at the back of this is the belief that the great works of salvation, as Honen mentioned repeatedly, have already been accomplished. As stated before, Amida had made the Vows, saying,

If, after my obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters, who desire in sincerity and faith to be born into my country (the Pure Land), should not be born by only adoring me ten times, may I not attain the highest Enlightenment!"<sup>(2)</sup>

His Vows have not been in vain, and he has become a Buddha, and now presides over the Pure Land. Thus the great work of salvation has already been accomplished. And it is now taught that only ten adorations of Amida Buddha will make it possible for us to be born into the Pure Land. Honen expressed this idea conclusively:

It must be known that the Great Vows are not vain. If people adore Amida Buddha, they will certainly be born into the Pure Land.<sup>(3)</sup>

In other words, "When his faith is firmly established, it is decided that he should be born into the Pure Land." And as

(1) *Mattō-shō* (the Letters of Shinran) 1st letter.

(2) cf. *Muryōju-kyō* (Sukhavati-vyuha Sūtra in Chinese) I.

(3) Hōnen: *Senjaku-shū* (the main work of Hōnen) III.

usual with him, Shinran also said boldly that "he need not await the end of his life."

These words give us the same feeling as the so-called Paul's "hope," from which flows out "delight." In regard to this delicate state of mind, the words of Shinran in the *Tannisho* are a precious description of a religious mind. Yuien-bo, one of his followers, asked Shinran:

If I adore Amida Buddha, I should naturally come to rejoice in the hope that I can soon be born into the Pure Land, I think. But actually I cannot rejoice as much as I should. Why?<sup>(1)</sup>

Shinran, in answer to Yuien-bo, said, "I had a similar doubt as you." And he continued, "Is it not a proof of our salvation that we cannot rejoice as greatly as we should? For it is the worldly passions that prevent us from rejoicing as much as we should. But Buddha, knowing this state of sinners, vowed to give his grace to us."<sup>(2)</sup>

They cannot rejoice as much as they should. But Buddha, knowing their foolishness, has accomplished the Great Vows of salvation in order to save them sinners. Then should they not be doubly delightful, Shinran thought, for such a kind consideration on the part of Buddha? Thus the religious mind of Shinran cannot be appreciated too much.

## 6

Finally, it must be pointed out that these two faiths are similar to each other in demanding an oral confession of faith. Needless to say, the oral adoration of Amida Buddha is an indispensable condition in the faith of the Pure Land Sect. Nay, the word "condition" is not suitable to express the very close and inseparable relationship between faith and adoration. Shinran explained it thus:

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(1) *Tanni-shō* 9.

(2) *ibid.* 9.

Faith and adoration are not two different things but one, for there is no adoration without faith, and no faith without adoration.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus the faith in and adoration of Amida Buddha are inseparably connected. The same idea is again expressed by Shinran as follows:

Though you have faith, and do not repeat the name of Amida Buddha, it profits you nothing. Though you repeat the name of Amida Buddha, and have not faith, you will not be able to be born into the Pure Land. Therefore, you should believe in the grace and repeat the name of Amida, and you will undoubtedly be born into the Buddha's Land.<sup>(2)</sup>

Honen taught the same thing more simply: "It is very good to believe in the grace of Buddha with the heart, and repeat the name of Buddha with the mouth."<sup>(3)</sup> At any rate, adoration as well as believing is indispensable in this faith.

On the other hand, it is not known so well among Christians that such an oral practice is essential. But, in the final analysis, the Christian faith has a similar structure.

In this connection we recall Paul who said definitely:

That is, the word of faith which we preach; because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.<sup>(4)</sup>

This is so definite and clear that there is no room for doubt. He said clearly that their salvation is accomplished when the two, belief with the heart and confession with the mouth, are combined together. Then he said, quoting a passage from the *Book of Joel* to prove his assertion:

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all

(1) *Mattō-shō* (the Letters of Shinran) 11th letter.

(2) *ibid.* 12th letter.

(3) *The Life of Hōnen*, Vol. 28.

(4) Romans 10, 9-10.



who call upon him. For, 'every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Then what was to be confessed with the mouth? It was, as Paul said, "Jesus Christ is our Lord." It was the confession of the belief that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God and that people can stand in the grace of God through his atonement. The confession did not become simple as the adoration in the Pure Land Sect in Buddhism, but it gradually became complicated and afterwards mingled with the articles of creed. Therefore, it did not come to play so important a role as the adoration of Amida Buddha in Buddhism. However, from the viewpoint of psychology, it cannot be denied that faith in one's heart will become truly firm and unshakable when it is expressed outwards with the mouth.

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(1) Romans. 10, 12-13.

## PART IV

### ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

—"What should I Do?"—

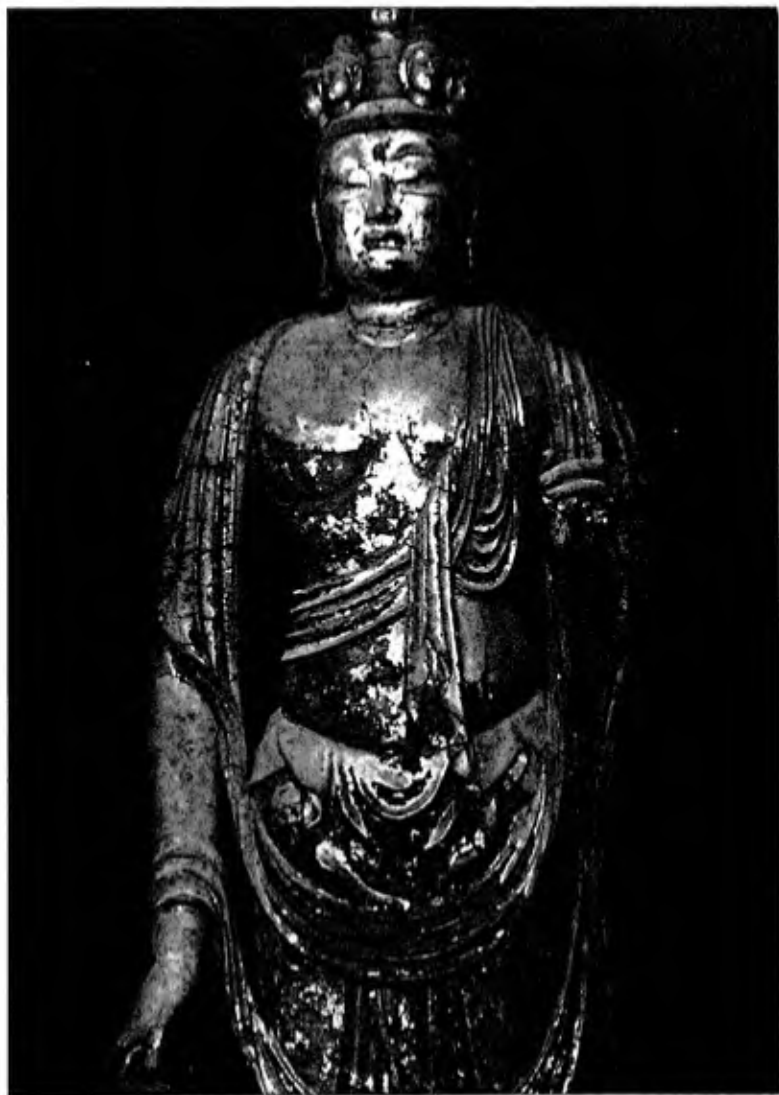
#### Chapter XV. Religious Practice and Morality

##### 1

The discussions on faith have been intended to be the answer to the question, "On what should I rely?" The believers of original Buddhism could find their support in the law (*dharma*), while Christians found it in the providence of God. Similarly, the believers of the way of the Pure Land Sect in Buddhism could attain the ultimate dependence in the Great Vows of Amida Buddha. Thus the way to obtain the dependence was different, but people found it anyhow, and could stand firmly on it. Then some declared that the old world had disappeared from their sight; others cried that the old was gone and the new was come. According to the Indian expression, such a person was called "twice-born" (*dviya*), and in the Christian expression, "newly-born." From here the newly born starts his new way of life, with his future lying ahead as ever and with his world surrounding him as before. But he is to begin to walk on a way of life entirely different from the past. "What should I do?"—this must be the new question put before him at this time.

Therefore, as the next step in the comparative study of the two faiths, we must take up and clarify this problem of religious practice both in Christianity and in Buddhism.

In Buddhism, religious practice has been spoken of as Buddhist ethics or morality; and in Christianity, it has been called Christian morality or ethics. There is, of course, ample reason for these words. As it is well known, Kant said that



Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva, a Buddha to be, of Shōrinji;  
a type of Buddhist love.



"What shall I do?" (*Was soll ich thun?*)<sup>(1)</sup> was a question of our practical reason and that it was the task of ethics to give an answer to this question. And what we are going to do now in regard to Buddhism and Christianity is to find an answer to the same question, "What shall I do?" So it is only natural that the answer concerns with ethics or morality.

When we think more carefully, however, it will be easily understood that the way of thinking about practice in Buddhism and Christianity is quite different from that of the world at large. It may probably be said that the ultimate aim of both religion and morality is "to live well." It is true that religion sometimes concerns itself chiefly with death rather than with life, but even in that case it tackles with the problem of death with a view towards finding a better way of life. Sometimes religious people stay away from the world, and behave themselves as if they abandoned their living. In these cases also it is clear that they after all endeavour to establish a better way of life, by getting rid of the foolishness of the secular world. Thus it must be said that the ultimate aim of religion is "to live well." There is great difference, however, between religion and ethics at the basis of thinking on what scheme of thought can a better way of life be sought and on what way of living can the idea of a better life be realized. First of all, this difference must be clearly understood.

Therefore, if we think of the word "ethics" or "morality" with the worldly idea in mind, then there could not exist such things as "Buddhistic morality" or "Christian ethics." Worldly ethics must be far surpassed, and worldly morality must be digged deep to the bottom. When we go far beyond worldly good and evil, and ask anew "What shall I do?" the problem of religious practice will loom large in our minds for the first time.

Among the various cultural fields created by man, nothing is so close to religion as morality. Their very close relation-

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(1) cf. Kant: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Reclam p. 610

ship sometimes gives us the impression that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. But we must not overlook the fact that the basal parts of the two are entirely different from each other. Especially it is important not to fail to see the difference when religion is to be discussed from the standpoint of its practice. Thus it is necessary to clarify the difference of the two before we take up the problem of religious practice.

## 2

Among the words preached by Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount seems to be most ethical. Some passages of it were quoted before, but now we must take them up once more and study them in connection with the present problem.

Jesus first took up one of the moral interdictions of old times. "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement.'" He was not satisfied with this, and added:

But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, "You fool!" shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.<sup>(1)</sup>

Here the old item, "Thou shalt not kill," is deeply probed into, to the recognition of human dignity and even to the quality of peace-makers.

Jesus also took up an old commandment and said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'" This must naturally be demanded of every man. What Jesus required with this item, however, was by far wider and deeper than what was required from common sense.

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(1) Matthew 5, 22-24

But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.<sup>(1)</sup>

Here the commandment was intensified to its inner meaning, and we naturally know that the only thing to which Jesus attached importance was purity of heart.

Again Jesus picked up an old moral item, and said, "Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely'." Of course it is ignoble and wrong to swear falsely. But Jesus said, "But I say to you, Do not swear at all." Why? He continued:

Either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply "Yes" or "No"; anything more than this comes from evil.<sup>(2)</sup>

Herein are spoken words of an entirely different world that could be reached only through deep self-examination and pious devotion.

Or again, taking up a moral usage of the old time, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'" The order of the world would not be maintained unless the good are rewarded and the evil are punished. It is natural in the logic of the secular world that he who beats others must be beaten back and he who kills others must be killed himself. But Jesus preached and said:

But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would

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(1) *ibid.* 5, 28

(2) *ibid.* 5, 33-36



borrow from you.<sup>(1)</sup>

Here in these words is clearly told what can never be understood by the logic of the secular world.

Furthermore Jesus quoted an old ethical code and said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.'" It is good for brothers to love each other, and relatives to be friendly to each other and to protect themselves against their enemy. This was perhaps the highest code attained by the logic of common sense in those days. But Jesus taught and said:

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.<sup>(2)</sup>

These words clearly indicate that Jesus' teachings were firmly based on a logic totally different from that of the secular world.

One's position here is to stand face to face with God, not with man. One must wish to be as perfect as his Father who is in heaven. Or in other words, one must observe the commandments in order to be the child of God. Then why did Jesus have to stand on such a basis and go far beyond the pale of common sense?

### 3

A young man once came to Jesus and said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good?

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(1) *ibid.* 5, 39—42

(2) *ibid.* 5, 44—48

One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."<sup>(1)</sup> Here we must first notice with eyes wide open at the words, "Why do you ask me about what is good?" And then we must dwell deeply on what is meant by the words, "One there is who is good." If we fail to understand the real significance of these two points, we also have to remain with the young man in the world of common sense, and cannot enter the world of faith preached by Jesus.

The young man asked Jesus which commandment did he suggest to be kept. Jesus said:

You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The young man said to him,

All these I have observed; what do I still lack?<sup>(2)</sup>

We cannot take the young man's words as a sign of haughtiness. Perhaps he was, compared with other people, very honest and good; otherwise he would not have come to Jesus to ask how he could have eternal life. When he was told to keep the commandments if he wished to enter eternal life, he could answer that he had kept all these things from his youth up. The only weakness with him was that he was lacking in deep and thorough self-examination. As written in the Gospel, he was a young man with great possessions which tied him firmly to the earth. He said that he had kept the commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if there existed in his mind true and deep self-examination, was it possible for him, when other people were poor, to say that he had great possessions on the one hand, and loved his neighbour as himself on the other? Jesus, who had the keen eye to see the innermost said, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."<sup>(3)</sup> These words must have been

(1) Matthew 19, 17; Mark 10, 17—18; Luke 18, 18—19

(2) Matthew 19, 18—20 (3) *ibid.* 19, 21

a great surprise for the young man, but they fell short of his conversion. The writers of the Gospel described the young man as he left the entrance of the "strait gate" as follows: "When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."<sup>(1)</sup> And it is recalled in this connection that after the young man had gone away, Jesus said to the disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."<sup>(2)</sup>

If we study carefully the conversation between Jesus and the young man, we can learn much from them.

Why do you ask me about what is good?

There is none good but one, that is God.

Here we see expressed the self-examination of a man who stands face to face with God. The rich young man asked, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" It is true that Jesus had told the young man to keep the commandments so that he might have eternal life, but the real significance of the commandments was to be like what he had preached in the Sermon on the Mount. There existed a deep meaning that could never be understood by man through his shallow knowledge. The young man thought that he had kept all these commandments, and asked what he lacked. There we can notice the great difference that exists between Jesus and the young man in regard to what is good and what is meant by the commandments.

And this difference must be said to be the difference between morality and religion. Here we find the reason why the good young man had to go away sorrowful from the entrance of the "strait gate" leading to life. And here is also the reason why Jesus had to say, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

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(1) *ibid.* 19, 22

(2) *ibid.* 19, 23—24

## 4

What Buddha states in a sutra on the motives of his entering the homeless life also points out the difference between the religious world and the secular one.

In the sutra he describes in detail his life before he went into the homeless life: In the garden of his father's mansion, there was a large pond, where white and red lotus blossoms were seen on the water. In his living room was burnt the best incense produced in Kasi, which filled the room with its good smell. Every inch of his raiment was made of the best cloth produced in Kasi. For him there were three villas to be respectively used in spring, summer, and winter. When he went out, an umbrella was held over him, and protected him from the scorching heat of the sun. At his father's house even servants were given meals of rice and meat. Thus he was rich and happy, and did not know the sufferings of the world at all.<sup>(1)</sup>

This simple and concrete expression, without the pomp and magnificence seen in Buddha's biographies of later days, gives us a vivid impression of his early life. In this way he first depicts his happy days in the secular world, and then he sets his eyes upon himself, and continues his talking, saying that he has been greatly mistaken to think that he was rich and happy, and did not know suffering.

I hated to see the sick, the old and the dead. But when I observe myself carefully, I find that I am also a mortal man destined to fall ill, to get old, and after all to die. I do not know of any means to avoid disease, decay and death. Neither do I think that there is a way to escape from them. Then it is not proper for me who can avoid neither disease, nor decay, nor death, to forget myself and to hate the sick, the old and the dead.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) cf. *Chu-agon-kyo* (the Medium-length Agama in Chinese) 29, *Sukhumala Sutra* (the Taisho Edition vol. I, p. 607) *Anguttara-nikaya* 3, 38.

(2) cf. *ibid.*

When he observed and examined himself in this way, he must have been greatly surprised at himself. In the sutra, he describes his surprise as follows:

When I thus observed myself, all the pleasure of my youth was gone; all the pleasure of my health was gone; and all the pleasure of my existence was gone.<sup>(1)</sup>

He must have been astonished at this discovery, and must have felt as if the ground were crumbling under his feet. Because of this, he gave up his happy life just as he would throw away an old hat, and went into the homeless life.

Here, too, two different worlds are spoken of. In Buddhist terms, one of them is the so-called "world" (*loka*), and the other is the "world outside the world." Of course, they are not two worlds with their respective heavens and earths, but one world, objectively speaking. However, from the standpoint of a man who lives in the same world, and observes and interprets it, and wishes to live well in it, they can never be said to be the same world.

In a Buddhist term, those who bury themselves in the secular world are called *balaprihagjana* (*bala*=ignorant, *prihagjana*=mediocrity). As a whole, it means "foolish common people who are unable to see the righteous law (*dharma*), and consequently live in the depth of ignorance, ceaselessly reaping what they sow." From the viewpoint of such a man, Buddha's life before he entered the homeless life seemed to be most happy and satisfying. But when he set himself free from the worldly bonds and turned his eyes upon the reality of the world, his life seemed entirely different. In the *Sutta-nipata*, there is the following verse:

He in whose breast there are no feelings of anger, who has thus overcome reiterated existence, that *bhikkhu* leaves this and the further shore, as a snake quits its old worn out skin.<sup>(2)</sup>

When we keep our eyes open to the truth, the world as it

(1) cf. *ibid.*

(2) *Sutta-nipata*, 1, *Uruga-sutta*, 6

has been will reveal itself anew in its value. The old notions of good and evil are thrown away, and a new and better life based on a totally different principle will come into sight. This is the new life in the "world outside the world."

## 5

As is well known among Buddhists, the *Seven Buddhas' Gatha* goes as follows:

Keep away from all evil,

Do all good,

Purify your mind by yourself,

This is the teaching of all Buddhas.<sup>(1)</sup>

The object of Buddhism is, after all, to elevate human life. It is no other than the betterment of life. Good helps us to live well, and evil is an impediment in the betterment of life. Therefore, we should, in order to lead a good life, endeavour to do as much good as possible on one hand and as little evil as possible on the other. As far as this aim is concerned there is no difference between Buddhism and the worldly morality, both of which have the same purpose, that is, to do good and to avoid doing evil. As to what is good and what is evil, however, the two clearly differ from each other in their notion. Especially we should not forget that the basic mode of thinking is entirely different. "Purify your mind by yourself." This passage provides a proof of the difference.

Various motives can cause us to do good. Desire for fame may motivate us to do good; expectation for good reward may be a motive for our doing good; or profit may make us think it desirable to do good. All these motives, however, are selfish. If we observe ourselves quietly and carefully, we cannot but be ashamed of these self-centered motives. But as a matter of fact, we take no notice of our selfishness, become self-com-

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(1) *Zōitsu-agon-kyō* (the Gradual Agama in Chinese) 44 (the Taishō Edition vol. II, p. 787).

placent of our little merits, and complain that we are not properly rewarded for our deeds, thus furnishing proof of our being selfish, foolish, and sinful. In Buddhistic terms, such merits of man are called "impure merits" or "blind merits." Here the word "impure" or "blind" means the state in which the worldly passions and desires have not yet been extinguished, and therefore the mind is not pure.

The merits in Buddhism are called "pure merits" or "clear merits." The merits of the world are based upon the affirmation of man's worldly desires, but Buddhistic merits or the merits of the "world outside the world" firmly refuse to compromise with the worldly desires, and instead, demand us to purify our minds upon which merits are to stand. In familiar language, the worldly merits are founded on selfish motives; while Buddhistic merits are based on pure motives. In other words, the former are "merits for obtaining something selfish," while the latter, rejecting ignorance and compromise, stand face to face with the order of the universe, that is, *dharma* or the law. Thus, an old scholar of Buddhism once said, "Obedience is good; violation is wrong."<sup>(1)</sup> Obedience is to obey the law, and violation means to violate the law.<sup>(2)</sup> The law is unselfish. If there exists even a shade of selfishness, there is no obedience. Unless one purifies one's mind by oneself, one cannot obey the law. Herein lies, it must be clearly understood, the Buddhistic basis of good and evil that is entirely different from the morality of the world.

So if we still think of "good" and "evil" with the old and general notions in mind, we shall never be able to understand what they really mean. The old idea must be thrown away. As a serpent casts off the old skin, we must throw away both good and wrong. Only when we cast away the old notions, and go beyond the worldly good and evil, and stand face to face with the right law and ask anew, "What shall I do?"

(1) E-on: *Daijō-gishō* (the Syllabi of Mahāyāna in Chinese) vol. 7 (Taishō vol. 44, p. 599).

(2) *ibid.* (Taishō vol. 44, p. 697).



we can truly tackle the problem of religious practice in Buddhism.

## Chapter XVI Religious Practice and Morality (contd.)

## 1

It is well known that Jesus called his and his disciples' way "the strait gate."

Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.<sup>(1)</sup> This is part of his Sermon on the Mount, and here he talked about the two opposing worlds. One was the earthly world which he and his disciples saw with their own eyes and hated with their own minds. It was the world ruled by evil, in which kings sided with Satan, and not only killed the prophets but also had the messengers stoned. The priests, scribes, and Pharisees were hypocrites who preached what they never attempted to do. They shut the door of the kingdom of heaven to people as well as to themselves, and prevented the entry into the kingdom of those who wished to enter. Thus, righteous people, being always oppressed and neglected, were blinded with tears. Therefore Jesus decided the "world" was an enemy of God and saints.

The "world," however, would not last long. God would soon wake up and put an end to such a world. The Day would come before long, for impiety and blasphemy had already reached their zenith. Jesus preached that since the kingdom of God drew near, people had to be repentant and prepare for the coming of the new era. Under these circumstances, to be Jesus' disciple meant, after all, to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, believing that it would soon come. But there

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(1) Matthew 7, 13-14.

were not many who had "ears"<sup>(1)</sup> to hear the glad tidings. Jesus often deplored this, and on one occasion, he expressed his grief through a children's song.

But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, "We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn!"<sup>(2)</sup>

On another occasion, he talked about his disciples, quoting a passage from the book of Isaiah:

With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says: "You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them." But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.<sup>(3)</sup>

Once he said loudly:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate.<sup>(4)</sup>

His indignation further developed into a curse, and he cried:

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?... That upon you may come all the righteous blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechari'ah the son of Barachi'ah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.<sup>(5)</sup>

Thus there distinctly existed two worlds in Jesus' mind. Though they were destined to be finally thrown into hell fire, people were rushing into this world, the plight of which was

(1) *ibid.* 13, 9.

(3) *ibid.* 13, 14-16.

(5) *ibid.* 23, 33-35.

(2) *ibid.* 11, 16-17.

(4) *ibid.* 23, 7-38.

like the blind being led by the blind into a bottomless ditch. Jesus described this with the words, "for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many."

On the other hand, very few were those who belonged to the other world, that is to say, the followers of Jesus who might be, at the end of the "world," welcomed into the kingdom of God and might be given an eternal life shining like the sun. It was probably because those who believed in the teachings of Jesus, for the time being, had to follow him bearing a cross on their backs. He once talked about this, saying, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force."<sup>(1)</sup> He also said, "The gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

## 2

It is well known that *The Lotus of Perfect Law (Saddharma-pundarika sutra)* contains seven famous parables, one of which is as follows:<sup>(2)</sup> In a village there was once a rich man whose house was roomy and accommodated many people. The house started a fire and was burning, but his children were playing in the house, with no intention to go out. The sutra describes this state of affairs like this:

In spite of their being in a burning house, they were absorbed in playing and were neither afraid of, nor surprised at the fire. The fire further spread and endangered them, but they neither cared what happened to them nor tried to get out. The father, surprised, ordered them to get out quickly, but they were so deeply interested in playing that they did not realize in the least what was happening to the house as well as to themselves, and ran about

(1) *ibid.* 11, 12.

(2) *Myōhō-rengē-kyō* (Saddharmapundarika sūtra in Chinese) 3, *Hiyubon* (Taishō Edition vol. 9, pp. 10-16.)

wildly, disobeying their father's command. Then the father thought of a plan and said to the children: "In front of the gate, a sheep-cart, a deer-cart, and an ox-cart are now waiting for you to come to play with. Get out of the burning house at once!" Hearing this they finally rushed out of the house to safety. *The Lotus of Perfect Law* further expounds that the three vehicles represented by the sheep-cart, deer-cart, and ox-cart, after all come to the one vehicle represented by the "great-white-ox-cart." The point worthy of note here is that the world is likened to a burning house. The psalm of the chapter describes this as follows:

People are deeply interested in worldly pleasures and have no wisdom.

The world is unstable like a burning house, full of sufferings, and very dreadful.

There always exist the worries of birth, decay, disease and death;

And the fires of them all are furiously burning all the time.<sup>(1)</sup>

The idea that the world is burning has originated with Buddha himself, it may be recalled.

Buddha, shortly after he began his gospel-preaching, went up Mt. Gayasisa (Mt. Elephant Head) with a number of his new disciples, and on the summit he preached to them the following:

All things, O *bhikkhus*, are on fire. And what are all things which are on fire? The eye is on fire, and the objects are on fire; the ear is on fire, and the objects are on fire; the nose is on fire, and the objects are on fire; the tongue is on fire, and the objects are on fire; the body is on fire, and the objects are on fire; the mind is on fire, and the objects are on fire. And with what are these on fire?

(1) *ibid. Gatha* (Taishō vol. 9, p. 12).

With the fire of passion, say I, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of infatuation; with birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair are they on fire.

Perceiving this, O *bhikkhus*, the learned and noble disciple conceives an aversion for the eye, for the ear, for the nose, for the tongue, for the body and for the mind. And in conceiving this aversion he becomes divested of passion, and by the absence of passion he becomes free.<sup>(1)</sup>

When he preached thus, the sutra tells us that his followers could become free from attachment and could be delivered from worldly bonds. This sermon by Buddha was one of the most fundamental of all his teachings.

It is also recalled that Buddha, on one occasion, said that the world was destroying itself. It happened in Jeta Grove at Savatthi that one disciple came to him and asked, "Master, the word 'world' is often used, but what is meant by the 'world'?" To this question, he answered as follows:

*Bhikkhus*, the word means that the world destroys itself. Eyes destroy themselves; the nose destroys itself; the tongue destroys itself; the body destroys itself; the mind destroys itself; the feelings that result from these senses, both pleasant and painful alike, destroy themselves. Thus all things destroy themselves, and we call this the world.<sup>(2)</sup>

This explanation took advantage of the fact that the word "*loka*" (the world) has also the meaning "change." Even apart from such an etymological significance, there is no doubt that Buddha observed the world to be destroying itself and changing.

Thus Buddha thought that the world was burning, destroying itself and repeating life and death. The reason for this state of the world, he explained, is that in this world truth is concealed; that the real state of affairs is not understood;

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahāvagga*, 21, 1-4.

(2) *Samyutta-nikāya*, 35, 82, *Loka*.

and that the dark rules over the light. It is written in a sutra that "because it destroys itself and conceals truth, we call it the world."<sup>(1)</sup> Buddha's teachings, which he himself practised and invited his disciples to follow, were to release themselves from such a world; and the state after the fulfillment of the teachings would be *nirvana*, which means the state of the flames being extinguished, because worldly concerns would no longer continue to burn. *Nirvana* was also spoken of as being the state of ultimate tranquility, because it far surpasses destruction, and life and death. It was further explained that *nirvana* is the state where wisdom alone shines brightly, because the dark is completely destroyed.

Buddha's idea was different from Jesus' idea of two visionary kingdoms. But the former also may be said to have classified this world into two. He sometimes called the two worlds "this side" and "that side." Sometimes the expression "the world outside the world" is widely employed as against the "world." As for man, those who are buried in the darkness on this side are the ordinary people or *prithagjana*, and those who have already crossed to the other side and have attained wisdom are the enlightened ones, the Buddhas.

### 3

Thus it has always been the way, not only of Buddhism and Christianity, but also of all religions of the world, to criticize the actual conditions of the world and the human life, and then to demonstrate the ideal state of them, trying to convert people to realize their ideals. In other words, we may say that a religion worthy of the name must be naturally based on a thorough self-examination of human beings and uncompromising criticism of the actual condition of the world. And what distinguishes religious practice from moral practice of the world is the thoroughness of such a self-examination and

(1) Ki-ki: *Yuishiki-jukki* (the Commentary of Vijnatimatrata-siddhi-sastra) vol. I (Taishō vol. 43, p. 237).



the severity of such criticism. It may further be asserted that whosoever enter at the "strait gate" of such self-examination and criticism will be able to enter a life of ultimate tranquility and build his house upon a rock.

Jesus, on one occasion, preached to his disciples, saying:

Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord'; and not do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon a rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is probably the desire of all people to live a life which is free from anxiety, just like the house built firmly on a rock and which neither shakes nor moves when a flood or a storm comes. But where can man find a foundation of such a stable life? Do his riches give it to him? Does his fame give it to him? Do his wife and children and family give it to him? Nay, nay. Jesus denied man's all such worldly concerns, and said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."<sup>(2)</sup> He preached that those who heard his teachings and performed them would be as stable as the house on a rock. Then on what ground could he preach like this?

What Buddha preached was also, after all, the ultimate dependence of unshakable human life. In his teachings, the uneasiness of the actual conditions of human life was completely penetrated. The actual human life was likened to a fish taken out of the water and thrown on the ground.<sup>(3)</sup> It was also compared to a rootless flower exposed to the scorching heat of the sun. Or again it was pointed out how foolish

(1) Luke 6, 46-49; cf. Matthew 7, 24-27.

(2) Matthew 11, 28.

(3) *Dhammapada* 34.

they were who counted on their children and riches.<sup>(1)</sup> We also recall the well-known passage of the *Dhammapada* which says:

Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we enter into the clefts of the mountains, is there a spot in the whole world where death could not overcome (the mortal).<sup>(2)</sup>

What is preached here is the limitation of human existence, of human possession and of human dependence. Man's life is indeed ephemeral, and his possession, his creation, and his affection are also transient. Consequently, the things on which he relies are inevitably unstable. He who tries to depend on his possession will be betrayed by his possession, and he who tries to depend on man will be betrayed by man. Thus a passage of the *Dhammapada* reads:

Men, driven by fear, go to many a refuge, to mountains and forests, to groves and sacred trees.

But that is not a safe refuge, that is not the best refuge; a man is not delivered from all pains after having gone to that refuge.<sup>(3)</sup>

Then is it impossible for man to attain his ultimate dependence? No; Buddha shows the way to ultimate dependence as follows:

He who takes refuge with Buddha, the Law, and the Order; he who, with clear understanding, see the four holy truths:—

Viz. pain, the origin of pain, the destruction of pain, and the eightfold holy way that leads to the quieting of pain;

That is the safe refuge, that is the best refuge; having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain.<sup>(4)</sup>

Then on what ground could he say that these are the best dependences?

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(1) *ibid.* 62.

(3) *ibid.* 188-189.

(2) *ibid.* 128.

(4) *ibid.* 190-192.

## 4

Aristotle, in his lecture on ethics, explains that "good" means to live well and to do well.<sup>(1)</sup> But, alas, how often we have been disappointed in our hopes to do well and to live well. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.<sup>(2)</sup> We hope to live well and we unintentionally live wrong. And this seems to be the way of life.

In a passage of St. Matthew, Jesus preaches:

So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.<sup>(3)</sup>

This passage is called the Golden Rule, and is thought to be the fundamental condition on which all morals stand. As long as we live a social life, we cannot imagine to live well without satisfying this basic rule. Confucius taught: "Do not do to others what you do not want to be done to you,"<sup>(4)</sup> and Kant established the basic proposition: "Do as the maxim of your will always be applied for the principle of universal legislation."<sup>(5)</sup> It seems that what they taught, after all, is the spirit of the Golden Rule.

But is it not true that man cannot so easily accomplish these fundamental conditions? Is it not the tendency of man to be generous to himself and cruel to others? Jesus asked, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"<sup>(6)</sup> He also preached, "Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men."<sup>(7)</sup> But is it not our human nature to sound a trumpet before us when we do even a little alms? Again he said, "But I say to you, Love your enemies

(1) cf. *Ethica Nicomachea* I.

(2) Romans 7, 19.

(3) Matthew 7, 12

(4) *Rongo* (the Sayings of Confucius) Book of *Gan-en*.

(5) Kant: *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Reclam p. 36).

(6) Matthew 7, 3.

(7) *ibid.* 6, 2

and pray for those who persecute you.”<sup>(1)</sup> But the truth is, we are selfish creatures who can salute only our brothers and can love only those who love us. So there is no other way for us than to admit unconditionally Jesus’ words, “There is none good but one, that is God.” There is no other way than to admit with tears the very fact that it was entirely a mistaken notion to do good through our will and power.

Then what should we do? Is it, after all, impossible for us to live a good life? Jesus’ disciples, on one occasion, asked, “Who then can be saved?” Then Jesus beheld them and said, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”<sup>(2)</sup> Here lies the unshakable foundation on which Jesus stood. Man is powerless and selfish. However hard he may try he can not move freely even a hair of his head. His love is narrow; his thinking is distorted; and his plan is ridiculous. It is because he does not know his folly and thinks that he can do good, that he has to repeat a wrong life.

God is almighty: he knows all things. Though we do not know what we need and how to live, our Father in heaven knows them well. We should, therefore, cast aside all our worldly concerns and rely entirely on the Providence of our Father. This is the teaching of Jesus. In short, it is to give up worrying about the world in which one lives, and to stand directly face to face with God in heaven; to rely upon the Father in heaven, casting aside all things. This means nothing other than faith itself, and it is in faith that people can enjoy a life as stable as a house built on a rock.

The ultimate dependence which Buddha preached to mankind was entirely different from this teaching of Jesus. What he taught was not to depend upon God, but to stand on one’s own feet, by understanding the law. Once, he said to some ascetics that however intensely they might pray, “Stone! Do not sink! Do not sink!” the stone had to sink. According

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(1) *ibid.* 5, 44.

(2) *ibid.* 19, 26.

to Buddha, such a way of thinking was a result of human folly.<sup>(1)</sup>

As said before, a certain sutra says: "Obedience is good, while violation is wrong." Obedience is to obey the law, and this means a good life; violation is to violate the law, and this means a wrong life. This is, after all, the principle of practice in the teachings of Buddha. He often employed the expression "by the law and observance," which means to see the law well, to know the law well, and to act according to the law, understanding it well. Therefore, in order to observe the law, we must see, know, and understand it well; and in order to live well according to the law, we must know it well. Then how can we know the law well? Buddha, as is well known, imposed this heavy responsibility upon man. He taught that our reason had to do this.

As has been already explained, he denied the worldly life and thought of man. As long as our reason is dirty and our thought is selfish, they must be denied. Man is greedy, irritable, and foolish. So long as such man regulates and controls our thinking and reasoning, they are to be denied by Buddha. On the contrary, when we are controlled by our reason, and behave ourselves at the dictates of our reasoning, then our ego will be no longer egoistic but just and lawful. To attain such a self Buddha preached the way of man's life "by the law and observance." This idea is expressed in the following passage of the *Dhammapada*:

Self is the lord of self, who else could be the lord? With self well subdued, a man finds a lord such as few can find.<sup>(2)</sup> Then how can we obtain such a self? The effort to attain it constitutes the core of Buddhistic practice, and much has to be said further concerning this.

(1) *Samyutta-nikāya* 42, 6.

(2) *Dhammapada* 160.

## Chapter XVII. On Mercy and Love

### 1

What is the first commandment of religious practice in Buddhism? We may say that it is mercy (*maitra*). What is the core of religious practice in Christianity? It is no doubt love (*agape*). Though the two are different in expression from each other, they will fall under the same category of virtue "love." Then, in what sense are these different from the "love" as a social virtue? And what differences are there between Buddhistic mercy and Christian love? By analyzing these differences, we may come to understand more concretely the features of religious practice, which has been dealt with in the previous chapters.

A passage from the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians is, I suppose, one of the most impressive teachings for Christians about the duty of love, which always lies in the deep of their hearts and come out at times to encourage them to do the duty.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.—So faith, hope, love

abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.<sup>(1)</sup>

Many Christians get these words by heart exactly to the letter, and draw up from them encouragement as well as strength to support their religious practice. For they are taught to believe that in these words lie the summary of all good things and the foundation of all righteous practices, and even that they need not bear any other responsibility than that of love. Paul preaches this in the epistle to the Romans as follows:

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does not wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.<sup>(2)</sup>

Love is the fulfilling of the law, and the realization of all religious practices. Therefore they need neither think of anything but the practice of love, nor bear any duty but that of love. Paul often emphasized this idea, which, of course, he had himself learned from Jesus. It was after Jesus' entry into Jerusalem that a scribe, who had been listening to Jesus' skillful discussion, went a few steps forward and asked him: "Which commandment is the first of all?" Then Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."<sup>(3)</sup> Jesus said these words, quoting from the Old Testament. The first commandment is found in *Deuteronomy*:

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(1) I Corinthians 13, 1-13.

(2) Romans 13, 8-10.

(3) Mark 12, 28-31; cf Matthew 22, 34-41.



Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.<sup>(1)</sup>

And the second commandment is found in *Leviticus*:

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.<sup>(2)</sup>

Perhaps Jesus answered with a legal term because he was asked by a lawyer.

Hearing Jesus' answer, the scribe affirmed Jesus' words, saying:

You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one, and there is no other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.<sup>(3)</sup>

And no man after that dared ask Jesus any question, the Gospel describes.

The old religion of Israel, which was written in the Old Testament, possessed many formalities as its religious practices. There were burnt offerings, sacrifices, and circumcisions, and the commandments of the law were becoming more and more complicated year after year. Jesus, under these circumstances, preached only one commandment, love. To love God and to love man—in these two he condensed all the commandments. Thus he once said, "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."<sup>(4)</sup> Paul expressed this idea by saying that love is the fulfilment of the law and that people should owe no man anything but to love one another. Herein lies a characteristic feature of Christianity, which is said to be the "religion of love."

## 2

It may be said that Christianity is the "religion of love," while Buddhism is the "religion of mercy." As was often

(1) Deut. 6, 4.

(2) Leviticus 19. 18.

(3) Mark 12, 32-33.

(4) Matthew 22, 40.



mentioned before, what Buddha preached was the way of self-control. He taught by his words and deeds that we should control ourselves, aiming at the establishment of the highest personality.

Self is the lord of self, who else could be the lord? With self well subdued, a man finds a lord such as few can find.<sup>(1)</sup>

This passage from the *Dhammapada* most aptly expresses the characteristics of Buddha's teachings. Therefore, those who want to follow his way must proceed first of all toward themselves; they must observe themselves, and reform and establish themselves. Another passage of the *Dhammapada* says:

Well-makers lead the water; fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters bend a log of wood; good people fashion themselves.<sup>(2)</sup>

However, when we turn our eyes that are thus concentrated upon ourselves, and look at people, we see that they are just as we are. Is it all right to give only a cold look upon them? Of course, not. Buddha taught, "Learn to be merciful to the whole world." There is a sutra named *Sutra of Mercy* in the *Sutta-nipata*, in which Buddha preaches as follows:

Whatever is to be done by one who is skilful in seeking what is good, having attained that tranquil state of *nibbana*:—Let him be able and upright and conscientious and of soft speech, gentle, not proud.

And contented and easily supported and having few cares, unburdened and with his senses calmed and wise, not arrogant, without showing greediness when going his round in families.

And let him not do anything mean for which others who are wise might reprove him; may all beings be happy and secure, may they be happy-minded.

Whatever living beings there are, either feeble or strong, all either long or great, middle-sized, short, small

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(1) *Dhammapada* 160.

(2) *ibid*, 145.

or large,

Either seen or which are not seen, and which live far or near, either born or seeking birth, may all creatures be happy-minded.

Let no one deceive another, let him not despise another in any place, let him not out of anger or resentment with harm to another.

As a mother at the risk of her life watches over her own child, her only child, so also let every one cultivate a boundless friendly mind towards all beings.

And let him cultivate goodwill towards all the world, a boundless friendly mind, above and below and across, unobstructed, without hatred, without enmity.

Standing, walking or sitting or lying, as long as he be awake, let him devote himself to this mind; this way of living they say is the best in this world.<sup>(1)</sup>

We should not remain for a long time in the dark, blinded with worldly passions and desires in the environment of the common run of men. We should resolutely come out of the dark, and return to ourselves, to establish a new and sublime personality. This was the way that Buddha brought in to the world. However, even when we have begun to follow his way, we are still a resident of this world; and even when we walk along the road of the outside world, we still remain with people in this world. Then, what should be our religious practice toward our fellow creatures? Needless to say, the principle of our practice is mercy. Buddha taught people to wish: "May all living creatures be blessed, and live in ease and comfort." He also taught: "Not doing whatever things which may be criticized by others, only learn to have this mercy."

Christians often say, "God is love," while Buddhists say, "The mind of Buddha is great mercy."<sup>(2)</sup> By these sayings we can estimate what value is set upon these items in the two

(1) *Sutta-nipāta* 8, *Metta-sutta* 143-151.

(2) *Kan-Muryōju-kyō* (Taisho vol. 12, p. 343)

religions.

### 3

In Buddhism, the world *kama* (love) is often spoken of with some unfavourable feeling. As it is thought to be the origin of desire, it is sometimes referred to as a synonym of sexual love. Or again, as it is thought to be the consuming strength similar to that of a thirsty man, it is often called *trishna* or "craving thirst." It is also recalled that a certain sutra warns us of its limitless craving: "As the sea drinks up infinitely the water of rivers, craving thirst cannot be satisfied for ever."<sup>(1)</sup>

Careful readers, however, will see that it is the original vital force of life which exists before good and evil. Physicists say that all things have attraction. Then, is it not true that this world is "the world for us" because we have such attraction? Like Kant, Buddha thought that by the mutual relations between the subjectivity of cognition and the objectivity of the object, all cognition would be formed. No other world would exist but that made by such relations. On one occasion, he talked on this:

Disciples, I am going to explain what is "everything." Listen to me carefully. What do we call "everything"? Eyes and colour, ears and voice, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and feeling, the mind and the law; disciples, these are "everything."<sup>(2)</sup>

He further added that "everything" besides the above-mentioned "everything" was only a word and did not exist in their world. Then, what is it that combines and connects eyes and colour, ears and voice, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and feeling, and the mind and the law, or in short, the subjectivity of cognition and the objectivity of the object? It is *kama* or love. It is the power to combine and the

(1) Dōsen: *Gyōji-shō* (a commentary of Vināya) 1, 2 (Taishō vol. 40 p. 127)

(2) *Samyutta-nikāya* 35, 23. *Sabbā*

energy to attract one another.

Now we cannot but recall the Fourfold Noble Truths preached in his first sermon. Then he taught, as the First Truth of suffering (*dukkha*), that we should observe the actual conditions of life. And as the Second Truth, he taught that we should see the reason or cause of the actual state of life. This is called the truth of the cause of suffering (*dukkha-samudaya*). It explains why this life of suffering has come about. He taught the reason, saying: The cause of suffering lies in the craving thirst that, coupled with pleasure and lust, craves for satisfaction everywhere: namely, the craving for passion (*kama-tanha*), the craving for existence (*bhava-tanha*), and the craving for vanity (*vibhava-tanha*).<sup>(1)</sup>

The former half of this passage reminds us of "the blind will for life" (*blinder Wille zum Leben*) of Schopenhauer. Nobody knows why we crave and desire. But there is a power that seems to push us up, if we may say so, in the fundamental darkness. It is "the blind will for life," and in Buddhism "love" is originally thought to be such a will. It becomes the power which connects our subjectivity to the object, and as a result, our world is formed. Buddha classifies such "love" into three categories, namely, sexual love, love for life, and love for vanity. This reminds us of Hobbes' "three natural desires," the two of which are the desires for existence, the first being sexual love, the second the desire to eat, and the third, which is peculiar to human beings, is vanity. These three kinds of desire exactly correspond to the three kinds of love mentioned by Buddha. If these kinds of desire or love enable our world to be formed, then, they must be originally the source of life that exists before good and evil; and to use a Buddhist term, they must be "things neither good nor wrong." But when they are brought into the world of value, we cannot say that they are good without modification. Man has made good fields through cultivation out of natural wildernesses. This is also the principle of culture, and even linguistically speaking, the

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(1) cf. p. 14

words culture and cultivation have the same root. When a Brahman said to Buddha, "You have to cultivate the ground and obtain food by yourself," Buddha answered, "I cultivate, too."<sup>(1)</sup> In the spiritual world, if we can turn the natural and vulgar into something good, by developing them, this must be culture and cultivation.

Love is the power that attracts mutually, and is the basic power that forms our whole world through its mutual attraction and combination. Without this, men and women would not be united, parents and children would not love each other, neighbours would not be on friendly terms, and our world would not be formed. Its natural state, however, is not always good. Even animals lead a cooperative life between males and females. The love of parent and child can be seen even among birds. Attraction between close objects exists even in the physical world. Until today, mankind has been criticizing, denying, controlling, and elevating such a natural state of love. And it is Buddhism and Christianity that have taught to enhance this love and to permeate it universally among all humanity.

But as for the process that led to such an idea of love of all humanity, the two religions took quite different roads.

#### 4

The practice of love in Christianity is, in short, to imitate God's love. Christian love is called *agape* as against human love, which is called *eros*, because it is thought that however highly human and animal love may be enhanced and purified, it can never be equal to God's love. *Agape* and *eros* are different kinds of love.

As mentioned before, a passage of the Sermon on the Mount teaches:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your

(1) *Samyutta-nikaya* 6, 11, *Kasi*; cf. *Zo-agon-kyo* (the Smaller Āgama in Chinese) 4, 1 (Taishō vol. 2. p. 27)

neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.<sup>(1)</sup> This passage leaves nothing unsaid as to the basic principle of Christian love. The natural state of man's love is to love those that are close to himself, namely, to love his wife, to love his children, to love his parents, to love his brothers, to love his friends, and to love his relatives. The closer the object of love is, the stronger is his love toward it; and the farther the object of love is, the weaker is his love toward it. It has generally been encouraged to hate an enemy extremely and to fight a foe bravely. Jesus, however, said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." He also said, "If any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."<sup>(2)</sup> This is quite different from the natural state of human love and hatred. Then why did Jesus teach these things? How can man be able to do these things? The answer was, "That you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

Jesus continued:

For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? . . . You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.<sup>(3)</sup> Only by wishing to be perfect, man can become the child of the Father who is in heaven. Only by wishing to be perfect, man can enter the love of God at a bound from the natural state of human love.

Paul once sent a letter to the Corinthians, saying, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."<sup>(4)</sup> This shows that imitation is the principle of Christian practice. To imitate Paul is to imitate Jesus; to imitate Jesus is to imitate the Father in heaven; and to imitate the Father in heaven is to wish to be as perfect as God. Here is the principle of the practice of

(1) Matthew 5, 43-45.

(2) *ibid.* 5, 39.

(3) *ibid.* 5, 45-48.

(4) I Corinthians 11, 1\*

Jesus' followers. It is not to be planned by our absurd knowledge; it is not to be calculated by our selfish and erroneous thinking; but it is to imitate Jesus and the Father in heaven, casting aside all things.

This imitation must therefore be realized in deeds as its practice. Jesus once warned his disciples, saying:

Not every one who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.<sup>(1)</sup>

He also said more concretely,

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.<sup>(2)</sup>

This shows well that Jesus' teachings are behavioristic. And Christian love as the imitation of the Father in heaven must also be embodied in our deeds. It is thought that we are imitating God and loving God, and imitating Jesus and loving Jesus if we actually extend our hand of love to neighbours, to the poor, and to "the least." Jesus said,

Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.<sup>(3)</sup>

Thus the love of God and the love of man are combined into one through practice.

## 5

It may be said that the basic principle of universal love in Buddhism is mercy, which extends over all living creatures through the feeling of the same sorrow. Because of this, it is not "love" which is the natural power of combination, but it is more appropriate to be called "mercy."

Buddha was once visited in Jeta Grove by a Brahman

(1) Matthew 7, 21 . (2) *ibid.* 5, 23-24

(3) *ibid.* 25, 45



named Sangarava. He asked Buddha a question:

It seems to me that the way of *samana* (wanderer) is to seek only one's happiness, because it aims at obtaining one's tranquillity and deliverance from worldly bonds. Are not the teachings for one's happiness inferior to those for many people?<sup>(1)</sup>

The question is reasonable, for Buddha's teachings seem, at a first glance, to aim only at one's happiness. Even those who called themselves Mahayanists in later days were not free from such a misunderstanding. Buddha gave a negative answer to the question, explaining the reason roughly as follows:

I went forth into the homeless life in search of the solution of my sufferings, and found the truths through which I could obtain the solution. Therefore I teach people to come to the solution of their sufferings also through the truths; and if many people could also reach the solution of their sufferings through the truths they should never be called the truths for only one's happiness.<sup>(2)</sup>

Needless to repeat, Buddha began to search for the truths by thoroughly examining his own sufferings. At first sight, his life before he went into the homeless life had seemed very happy; however, he found that he also bore heavily such human sufferings as birth, decay, disease, and death, and so he entered the homeless life in search of a solution. Now when he lifted his eyes turned so far toward himself, he saw that people, just as he had been before, were thoughtlessly spending every day, without knowing the heavy human sufferings they bore. So he taught them:

You must open your eyes and set them upon yourselves.

And if you can be convinced of my teachings, you must obtain the solution through them.

This was the spirit of Buddha's forty-five-years gospel-preaching since he attained enlightenment.

We now recall that in his teachings, he said:

Go now for the benefit of the many, for the welfare of

(1) *Anguttara-nikāya* 3, 60

(2) *ibid.*



mankind, out of compassion for the world.<sup>(1)</sup>

At first glance this seems to concentrate on the individual. The teachings, however, unite everybody at the depth of one's self. And only at the depth of one's self, one can really realize that others also bear the same heavy burden of human sufferings. This is what we call in Buddhism the feeling of compassion for the same suffering and same sorrow. Only he who sheds tears over himself can shed tears over others. Out of compassion flows forth the spirit of mercy.

Man's thought can go anywhere.

Wherever one may go, however,

One may find nothing dearer than oneself.

The same is with others.

Therefore, one who loves oneself,

Should not hurt others.<sup>(2)</sup>

Here is the basic form of compassion for others. When one softly applies his personal observation to others, there will be the feeling of mercy. A certain sutra explains, "Compassion is mercy, while grief is sorrow."<sup>(3)</sup> Only when there is the feeling of deep grief, there will be the feeling of comprehensive compassion. Mercy is a universal love thus formed in human beings, and it can go far beyond the pale of natural human love only when it is based on the complete realization of human suffering.

(1) *Vinaya-pitāka, Mahāvagga* 11, 1

(2) *Samyutta-nikāya* 3, 8, *Mallikā*

(3) *Daijō-Gishō* (the Syllabi of Mahāyana Buddhism) vol. 7 (Taishō vol. 44, p. 686)

## Chapter XVIII. What Maketh Thee to Differ from Another?

### 1

Among Kant's works in his later years is his *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, in which he states that there are two different meanings when we say that a man has a personality. One is, in short, a naturally endowed character, for example, a plethoric, choleric, phlegmatic, or melancholic type. This classification concerns man as a sensible or natural being, and does not concern man as a personal being. The other is a man of principle who is governed by a certain practical principle; in this sense, a man is not a natural being, says Kant,<sup>(1)</sup> but a man of principle, of inner value, a man beyond all value. And a person to be worthy of the name "personality" is no other than a person in the latter sense.

Now, how are we able to possess such personality? From where can we get such a practical principle and become men of personality? Since it is not what we have as a natural gift, temperamental and hereditary, it must be of our own making. It goes without saying that man cannot create himself independent of what is given by nature. We cannot exist independent of our body and our mind. And yet we can make non-natural beings of ourselves, retaining our natural selves. And it is in this sense that man comes to possess a principle and be a man of personality, which according to Kant, is "what man makes out of himself."

It may seem a wild association, but I cannot help recollecting here Buddha's saying: "I, too, cultivate." When he came into a village of Magadha, he went to a Brahman preparing for farm work and stood with a bowl in his hand to get his food. At the sight of it the Brahman poured upon

(1) Kant: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. 1798, s. 184

him these words: "*Samana!* I cultivate the soil, sow seed, and then eat. You, too, ought to cultivate, sow, and then get your food." Obviously it was a reproach on Buddha asking for alms. The Brahman maintained that man should live by the sweat of his brow, that is, those who do not work must not eat. It is a criticism at the living attitude of those who do no manual labour but engage mostly in spiritual problems. What do you think Buddha said in answer to this criticism? "Brahman! I, too, cultivate, sow seed, and then eat," was Buddha's answer. Failing to grasp the real meaning of the answer, the Brahman asked Buddha, "Though you say you cultivate, you don't look like a farmer. Where on earth are your spade, seed, and ox?" Buddha explained that wisdom was his spade, faith was his seed, and devotion was his ox carrying a heavy load, and made the Brahman understand why he had said, "I, too, cultivate." The Brahman followed Buddha's teachings and lived a life of a lay-member thereafter, according to the sutra.<sup>(1)</sup> Here I recall that among European languages, to "cultivate" means both tilling the soil and developing one's mind. The English word "agriculture" is derived from Latin *ager-cultura* which implies cultivation of land. At the same time *cultura* signifies, as you know, civilization and education. Keeping this in mind and once more returning to the dialogue between Buddha and the Brahman, we can understand the meaning of Buddha when he said: "I, too, cultivate."

## 2

What Buddhistic practice aims at is, in short, the development of human beings, that is, the fertilization of a human desert. "I, too, cultivate," which Buddha declared to the Brahman, was no sophistry. Far from being sophistry, it clearly points out the right way for human improvement.

Buddhism is the teachings not only of Buddha, Sakyamuni,

(1) *Samyutta-nikāya* 7, 11 *Kasi*.

but also of the way to become Buddha, an enlightened one. And the way to be Buddha is no other than the way of human development, the way of cultivation. It is a farmer that tills a desert with his hoe and spade to make it a rich field, sows seed, and has a good harvest. Similarly, it is none but Buddha that cultivates the desert of the human mind, that is, the foolishness of common people, sows seed, and gets a crop of ultimate freedom called *nirvana* in the rich soil of human beings. Buddha found out the way himself and told people to understand and follow the way too. We may say, therefore, that Buddha is the one who cultivated the soil himself to get a crop, and taught us to follow him by cultivating the soil and harvesting fruits of human development. In this sense we understand the saying of Buddha: "I, too, cultivate." Thus the aim of Buddhistic practice is, after all, cultivation.

Jesus often said to people, "Follow me!" By the sea of Galilee he said to two brothers, Simon and Andrew, casting a net into the water, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And they immediately left their nets, and followed Jesus.<sup>(1)</sup> And when Jesus called James and John, with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, the two brothers immediately left the ship, nets, and their father to follow him.<sup>(2)</sup> At another time he saw a tax-collector named Matthew sitting at the toll-house, and Jesus said to him, "Follow me!" Matthew arose and followed Jesus.<sup>(3)</sup> Through these simple descriptions of the Gospels we can get at the truth of Christianity. In association with this, we cannot fail to remember Buddha's frequent call: "Come, O *bhikkhu*!" When Sunita, of humble birth, laid down the load of filth and fell prostrate at the feet of Buddha, he simply said: "Come, O *bhikkhu*!" Sunita's reminiscence of his confirmation is most impressive among the verses of the *Psalms of the Brethren* (*Theragatha*).<sup>(4)</sup> When blood-thirsty Angulimala threw away his

(1) Matthew 4, 19-20

(2) *ibid.* 4, 21-22.(3) *ibid.* 9, 9.(4) *Theragāthā* 620-625.

sword and knelt down at the feet of Buddha, he gave the same call: "Come, O *bhikkhu!*"<sup>(1)</sup>

He, who formerly was reckless and afterwards became sober, brightens up this world, like the moon when freed from clouds.

He, whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds, brightens up this world, like the moon when freed from clouds.<sup>(2)</sup>

These two well-known verses of the *Dhammapada* are reminiscences of Angulimala who thus followed Buddha. Buddha said, "Come, O *bhikkhu!*" not only on such occasions but also when he gave someone his approval to his *samgha* (Buddhist order). The following reception of the five *bhikkhus* is a typical example: Having *dharma* of the seen, *dharma* of the won, *dharma* of the understood, *dharma* of the wholly penetrated-into, having lost perplexity and doubt, having won confidence, and not being in dependence on others with respect to the teaching of the teacher, they said to Buddha:

We pray to enter the order and become your disciples under your instruction.

Buddha said in reply:

Come, *bhikkhus!* Well declared is *dharma!* Walk according to pure life for right endmaking of suffering.<sup>(3)</sup>

This was the ordination of these elders, and this marked the first step in their religious practices. The words were "Follow me!" with Jesus, and "Come, O *bhikkhus!*" with Buddha. In both cases it was necessary for one to "come." But there is a distinct difference between these two ways as to what one should do after having come.

### 3

In the Gospel according to St. Luke there is a well-known parable of the "Prodigal Son." Its outline is as follows:

A man had two sons; the elder son was good, and the

(1) *ibid.* 866-870.

(2) *Dhammapada* 172-173: cf. *Thera-gāthā* 871-872.

(3) cf. p. 73.

younger was not. The younger son asked his father to give him his share of the fortune, and on receiving it took his journey into a far country, where he wasted all he had. When he had spent all, a mighty famine arose in that land and he began to be in want. He came to himself and repented of his misconduct. "I have sinned against heaven and before my father," he said, "and am no more worthy to be called my father's son. I will ask him to make me as one of his hired servants." And the penitent son came back to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And the father received his son with joy.<sup>(1)</sup>

Needless to say, it is a parable showing us what is God's love—God's joy with which He receives a penitent sinner. The end of the parable, which is here not so important, is as follows:

The elder son, seeing this entertainment for his brother, became very angry and said, "Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf." The father said to him, "It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."<sup>(2)</sup>

Buddhism has a counterpart of this parable. It is a famous parable which explains Buddha's mercy by giving an illustra-

(1) cf. Luke 15, 11-24.

(2) cf. *ibid.* 15, 25-32.

tion of fatherly love. We find this parable in *The Lotus of Perfect Law (Saddharmapundarika sutra)*, so-called "A Wealthy Man and his Prodigal Son." The following is its gist:

An imprudent son forsook his father and ran away from home to a far country. Scores of years had passed since the son left home. The sorrowful father sought his son in every direction in vain, till he was tired out and settled in a town, where he led a wealthy life. Rich as he was, he was never at ease in mind thinking of his lost son. "My days are numbered," said the aged father. "Many years have passed since my foolish child forsook me and left home. Who should succeed me if I should pass away?" It happened then that the foolish child in rags came to the town, begging food, and passed in front of his father's mansion. He little dreamed it was his father's. Only he was frightened at its splendor. His father, recognizing his son, told his servant to take him to his mansion. The father, however, did not reveal his identity. On the contrary, he told his son first to clean his filth. The father wanted to make his son worthy to be called his son. Assigning humble work to his son, the father led him with incessant encouragement. It was not until his son had got used to his duty, withstood temptation, and broken himself of a mean spirit, that the father revealed his identity, declared him to be his heir formally, and introduced him to his relatives, king, and other people.<sup>(1)</sup>

The sutra says that such is the mercy of Buddha.

These two allegories have common material. In either case, an impudent, prodigal son, living in want, is the hero of the story. Without reproaching his misconduct, the father received him with boundless love. The former is an allegory of God's measureless love, and the latter is that of Buddha's profound mercy. The remarkable resemblance in material and conception suggests something more than a mere coincidence. Neverthe-

(1) *Myōhō-rengē-kyō* (Saddharmapundarika in Chinese) vol. 4 (Taishō vol. 9, p. 16)



less, there is one important difference between the two, that is the difference in the treatment of the prodigal son.

Both fathers longed for their sons' return. Nothing is greater than these fathers' joy when their sons came home. But they received their sons in a conspicuously contrasted manner. At the sight of his son, one father rushed out to fall on his neck and kiss him. He immediately gave the best robe and food and entertained the son so much that his elder brother was made angry. It is different with the other. This father waited for his son to develop a better human nature step by step, giving him some humble and suitable work. The father treated his son according to the stage he had reached. Indeed, either case is an expression of fatherly love, but with the former paternal feelings are dominant, with the latter reason is ruling.

This contrast between two fathers is symbolic of the contrast between Buddha and Jesus. Both of them called out, "Come!" It is necessary for one to come first of all. Man can enter neither the way of Buddha nor that of Jesus unless he has converted himself. He must realize his faith. But once he has become a follower of either of them, his way of following differs as is shown in the cases of these two roving sons.

#### 4

"Who sees anything different in you?"<sup>(1)</sup> once wrote Paul to his followers in Corinth. In what case can we say a man differs from another? Some say that a rich man differs from the poor. But it is a difference in mere property. Some say that a man of rank differs from common people. But it is a difference in what is capable of being given or taken away. Then, what is really meant when we say a man differs from another? As a matter of course, it means that he has an inner value different from others, which is based upon the conception of personality. According to Kant, as I have said before, such a man is of one principle and superior to all value. Only

(1) I Corinthians 4, 7.

when a man rules himself with some practical principle, he may be asked, "What maketh thee to differ from another?"

Now, what is the practical principle by which Christians should be governed? If they are asked, "What maketh thee to differ from another?" what is their answer? The answer is, without doubt, to die in the former self and live in Christ. Paul wrote to the brethren in Galatia, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."<sup>(1)</sup>—a remark which shows us most aptly how a real Christian should be. It is well known that Jesus once said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, . . . ." <sup>(2)</sup> And like a corn of wheat man must die, too. "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies."<sup>(3)</sup> One cannot be newly born without dying in what is sown. The first man was "from the earth, earthy"; the second man is "from heaven."<sup>(4)</sup> Now that he has come through a new birth, he cannot help being a man of totally new principle. Because now he is not of the earth, earthy, but from heaven, heavenly.

Jesus once said to his followers: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."<sup>(5)</sup> It is natural that a man from heaven should wish the will of Father in heaven will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Earthy desires have already left him, together with earthy man. He only longs that the will of Father will be done. "Imitation" arises from this point as their practical principle. Paul taught thus to Corinthians: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."<sup>(6)</sup> Those who choose their conduct by self-interest will stumble and fall at last; and to be unselfish, to do unselfish deeds, we should follow others. And it is not until a man has been able to find a prototype of imitation in God, in Christ who followed God, and in Paul who followed Christ, that he can do God's will and follow Christ.

(1) Galatians 2, 20.

(3) I Corinthians 15, 36.

(5) Matthew 7, 21.

(2) John 12, 24-25.

(4) *ibid.* 15, 47.

(6) I Corinthians 11, 1.

## 5

Thus runs a verse in the *Dhammapada*:

A man is not a mendicant (*bhikkhu*) simply because he asks others for alms (*bhikkhate*); he who adopts the whole laws (*dharma*) is a *bhikkhu*, not he who only begs.<sup>(1)</sup>

Buddha, as has been stated, taught us to cultivate ourselves. If it is asked what is the principle of the way to develop oneself, the answer is, in brief, "to see and follow the *dharma*." When one asks, "What maketh thee to differ from another?" any Buddhist should be able to answer at once, "We are Buddhists because we see and follow the *dharma*." Another verse in the *Dhammapada* runs as follows.

Not by tonsure does an undisciplined man who speaks falsehood become a *samana*; can a man be a *samana* who is still held captive by desire and greediness?"<sup>(2)</sup>

He who always quiets (*sameti*) the evil, whether small or large, he is called a *samana* (a quiet man), because he has quited all evil.<sup>(3)</sup>

These verses tell us that mere appearance or act does not make *bhikkhus* or *samanas* differ from others; the important point is, if one is governed by law, and law is the guiding principle of his practice or not.

In the life of the primitive Buddhist order, as is well known, they neither prayed nor worshipped, but they held simple ceremonies called *posadha* and *pravarana*. The former implies "clean living" or "development," that is to say, a practice of becoming pure by evading evils. The manner of the ceremony is recorded as follows: Twice a month, on the nights of a new moon and a full moon, disciples of Buddha used to hold this ceremony at a proper place. As little candles are lighted after sunset, *bhikkhus* begin to assemble. The elder at a seat of honour begins to read the commandments aloud. As he reads,

(1) *Dhammapada* 266.

(2) *ibid.* 264.

(3) *ibid.* 263.

chances for repentance are given to *bhikkhus* who have violated the commandments in the past half month. Those who have sins must confess them; those who have none may meditate in silence.<sup>(1)</sup> Here are opportunities for repentance and encouragement. After the ceremony one of the elders preaches for the laity.

*Pravarana* means "willingness." It implies letting other *bhikkhus* censure one's error as much as they please. This ceremony is simpler and more beautiful than the former. After the three months' summer training in which they have shut up themselves, the *bhikkhus* who have been living together must part company to start wandering. At the departure, all of them meet at one place to hold the ceremony. On the ground devoutly squat down all *bhikkhus*, even the elders. When the ceremony has begun, a *bhikkhu*, from the eldest to the youngest in turn, with his hands clasped in the air, asks his brethren earnestly if he has committed any sin during these three months. Every *bhikkhu* says three times as follows: "If you see, hear, or doubt something of me, brethren, please take compassion on me and point it out. I will remove it if I see it."<sup>(2)</sup> When every *bhikkhu* has had his turn, the ceremony comes to an end.

We must take notice of the fact that the primitive Buddhist order had no ceremony except these two, which had no elements except repentance and encouragement. There was no worship, no sacrifice, no spell, no prayer; there lay only the straight and pure way of self-training for human cultivation. The real phase of the religious practices of Buddha's disciples was the life guided by one principle: "I, too, cultivate." The Buddhists in later years should reflect on this point again and again.

(1) *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga* 2, 3, 3.

(2) *ibid.* 4, 1. 14.

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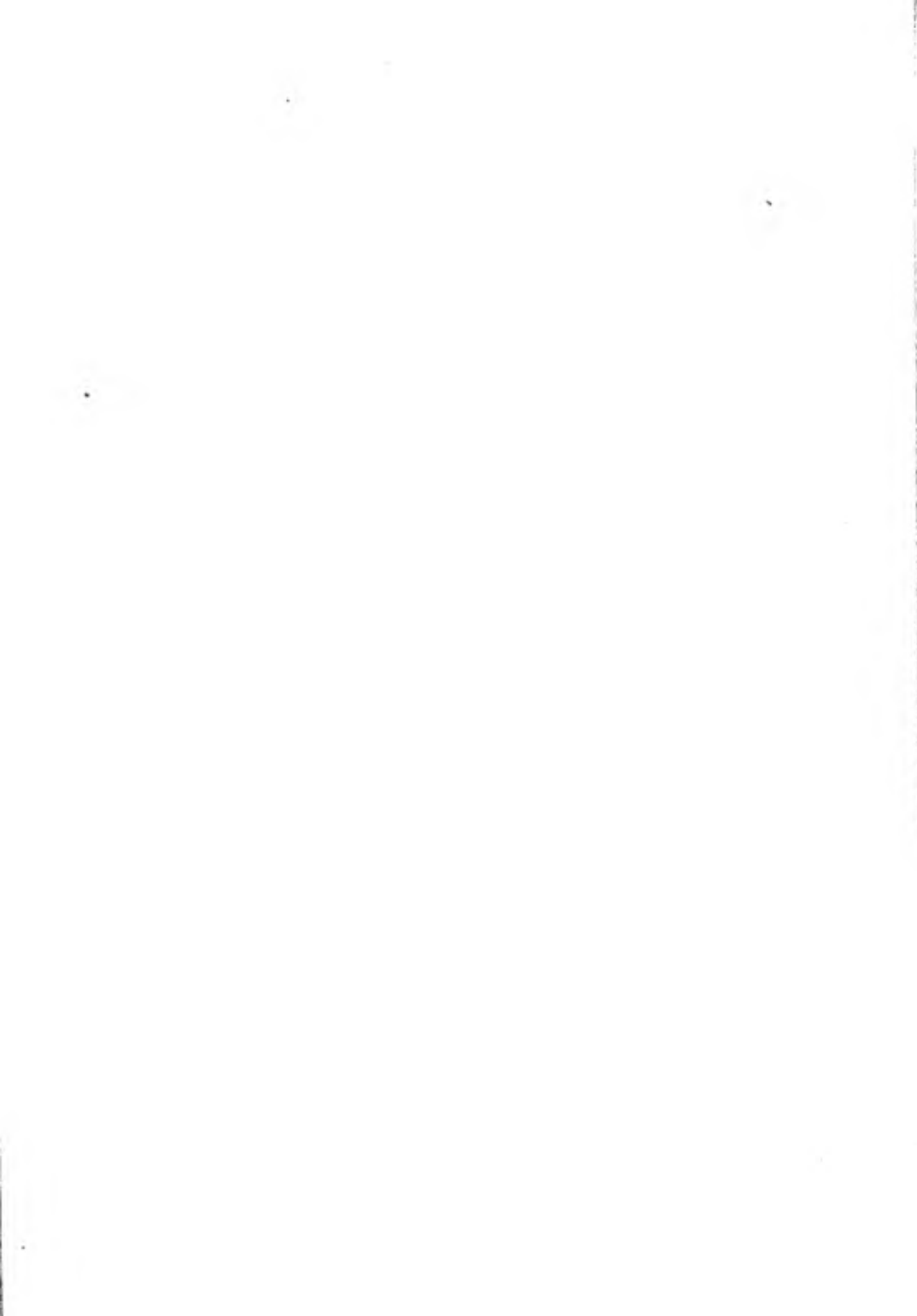
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